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陆文夫小说选

Selected Stories by Lu Wenfu

陆文夫　著

Lu Wenfu

中国文学出版社

Chinese Literature Press

外语教学与研究出版社

Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

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大学生读书计划

——中国文学宝库出版呼吁

在即将开机印刷这第一批50本名为中国文学宝库的英汉对照读本时，我们的心情竟然忧多于喜。因为我们只能以保守的5000册印数，去面对全国400万在校大学生。

虽然我们并非市场经济的局外者，若仅为印数（销售量）计，大可奋起而去生产诸如TOFEL应试指南，或者英语四六级模拟试题集一类的教辅图书，但我们还是决定宁可冒着债台高筑的风险，也有责任对大学生同胞发出一声亲切的呼唤：请亲近我们的中国文学。

身为向世界译介中国文学和向国内出版外语读物的，具有双重责任的出版社，我们得知目前大学生往往仅注重外语的学习而偏废了母语的提高，以及忽视了中国文学的阅读，放弃了人文知识的训练。有统计表明，某理工院校57%的同学不曾读过《红楼梦》等四大名著，以致校园内外流行着“样子像研究生，说话像大学生，作文像中学生，写字像小学生”的幽默。还有一副这样的对联，说大学生的文章是“无错不成文，病句错句破残句，句句不堪入目；有误方为篇，别字错字自造字，字字触目惊心”，横批“斯文扫地”。作为未来社会中坚和整个社会发展关键力量的大学生，这种“文弃”现象的流行，势必导致一场人文精神危机的爆发。对照以科学与人文精神追求为主题的五四新文化运动，八十年的历程告诉我们，以上提醒绝非危言耸听。

我们已经迈入知识经济时代，在追求科学知识的同时，创新精神已成为关键；而创新的源泉其实有赖于多学科多领域知识的交融，依靠的是新型的复合型人才，所以，文学对于新一代

的大学生来说绝非装点，而是沟通自然科学与人文科学的桥梁，使我们在汲取知识的同时更能获得智慧，于创造物质的同时还进一步丰富和完善着精神；无怪乎爱因斯坦认为自己受影响最大的竟是陀思妥耶夫斯基。由此证明，一个真正的科学家应该拥有丰富的文学和文化知识以及完整的人格。十年前，七十五位诺贝尔奖得主聚会巴黎，当时他们所发表的宣言开篇就是，“如果人类要在 21 世纪生存下去，必须回首 2500 年去吸收孔子的智慧。”确实，十年的时间让我们有目共睹，现代经济科技的飞速发展何尝不是一柄双刃的剑？只有文化的力量才能抵消随之而来的负面后果。可见，知识的获取与技能的训练对于大学生来说固然重要，但文化与修养却尤需关切。正因为大学生代表着社会先知先觉的知识力量，置身当前的文化现实，就应有一分责任感与使命感，力求对知识技能以外许多带有根本性质的精神追求形成明确的意识，从而具备一种对生命意义进行探索与追问的精神，一种以人文精神为背景的生存勇气和人格力量。那么，能够引导我们探索前行的一盏明灯，不就是闪烁着理想光芒的不朽的文学名著吗？

一个人乃至一个民族，从其对文学的亲疏态度，可以衡量出其文化素质的程度。文学应是从人类文化中升华出的理想的结晶，她“使人的心灵变得高尚，使人的勇气、荣誉感、希望、尊严、同情心、怜悯心和牺牲精神复活起来”（威廉·福克纳）；无疑，只有文学才能从更高的层次上提升人的文化素质和整体素质，充实人的内心世界，焕发人的精神风貌，带给人们真善美。而亲近文学，特别是热爱祖国灿烂的文学以及文化，正是当代中国大学生加强文化修养，弘扬人文精神的有力脚步。

“越是民族的，就越是世界的”，中国文学属于中国，也属于世界。和平是人类的共同愿望，交流与共享则是新世纪的潮流。

中国当代大学生的血液里流动着数千年的文化积淀，没有理由在让世界了解中国大学生聪明才智的同时，却无缘分享我们的骄傲——中国大学生不但能够读懂英语的莎士比亚，而且能让世界感动于中国文学的伟大。

这是我们作为出版者的理想。我们原有一个世纪礼物的构想，是同大学生一起做一个"读书计划"。这一次将中国文学的最新荟萃配设高水平的英语译文，是其中推荐给新世纪大学生的第一批读物。盼望着您——我们无数知音中的5000名先来者，给我们鼓励，也给我们意见和批评。

编者

一九九九年五月三十日

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只有文学才能从更高的层次上提升人的文化素质和整体素质，充实人的内心世界，焕发人的精神风貌，带给人们真善美。而亲近文学，特别是热爱祖国灿烂的文学以及文化，正是当代中国大学生加强文化修养，弘扬人文精神的有力脚步。

The Man from a Pedlars' Family

To speak of pedlars and well-born families in the same breath is a little unusual. Perhaps we're being a little too literal here. Let's just say that there is a certain Zhu Yuanda whose family from generation to generation has been engaged in peddling. During which dynasty did his family begin to peddle? It has never been ascertained. What things did they peddle? This too can't be said for certain. All I remember is that, thirty-two years ago, the day after I moved to this lane, just after dusk, I heard the sound of a bamboo clapper approaching from a distance. The rhythm was very marked. "Duo duo duo, duo duo, di di di duo, duo duo, di di duo." Although there were only two notes, there were many variations in modulation and in the strength of the tapping. Under the cover of night it seemed as though someone were calling or relating something.

I opened the long window facing the street, and looking down I spotted a light at the end of the alley. The light wavered on the white chalk walls, whizzing along like a spirit on night patrol. Gradually it became more distinct. It was a brightly lacquered *wonton* carrying pole. Steam was rising above the pole, while sticks of firewood burned in a stove. The pole carrier was Zhu Yuanda. At that time he

小贩世家

小贩而称世家，有点不伦不类；此地只能望文生义，说是有个叫朱源达的人，他家世世代代是做小贩的。

朱源达家从哪朝哪代便开始做小贩？没有考证过；都是贩卖的哪种货品？也难一一说清楚。只记得三十二年前，我到这条巷子里来定居时，头一天黄昏以后，便听见远处传来一阵阵敲竹梆子的声音，那声音很有节奏：笃笃笃、笃笃、的的的笃；的的的、笃笃、的的笃。虽然只有两个音符，可那轻重疾缓、抑扬顿挫的变化很多，在夜暗的笼罩之中，总觉得是在呼唤着、叙说着什么。

我推开临街的长窗往下看，见巷子的尽头有一团亮光，光晕映在两壁的白粉墙上，嗖嗖地向前，好像夜神在巡游。渐渐地清楚了，原来是一副油漆亮堂的馄饨担子，担子上冒着水汽，红泥锅腔里燃烧着柴禾。那挑担子的便是朱源达，当年十七、八岁，高而精瘦。担子的旁

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was perhaps seventeen or eighteen, tall and thin. Beside him shuffled an old grey-haired fellow — his father. His carrying days were over. He'd very recently passed the carrying on to his son. Now he went on ahead striking the bamboo clapper, leading his son along the bumpy road he'd followed in his life that had enabled him to sell enough *wonton* .

In those days I was out of work. I relied entirely on helping several overworked Chinese language teachers, correcting students' composition exercise notebooks, getting a share of "classroom chalk dust" so as to make ends meet. This was not easy work and every night I was burning the midnight oil!

The "di di, duo duo" sound of that clapper passed nightly beneath my window. It would always depart at dusk and eventually return, most often just as the Beijing opera goers were leaving the theatre.

Whoever works through the long winter nights dressed only in a thin shirt becomes frozen stiff with only his shrunken heart continuing to beat. Inside the room there is no stove, while outside the north wind cuts through the window lattice like a sharp knife. The swirling night rain is turned into ice crystals which dance on the roof tiles. After midnight the whole world becomes an icehouse. At that hour, a steaming hot bowl of *wonton* dumplings for five *fen* with which you can have extra helpings of soup and hot sauce is a powerful temptation and a delightful pleasure!

Almost from the first day I became Zhu Yuanda's main

边走着一个头发斑白，步履蹒跚的老头，那是朱源达的父亲。他再也挑不动了，正在把担子向儿子交付，敲着竹梆子走在前面，向儿子指明他一生所走过的、能够卖掉馄饨而又坎坷不平的小路。

那时候我没有职业，全靠帮几个兼课太多的国文教员批改学生的作文簿，分一点粉笔灰下的余尘，对付着生活。这活儿不好干啊，夜夜熬着灯火！

那的的笃笃的竹梆子声，夜夜从我的窗下经过，出去总在黄昏，回来得却有早有迟，通常都在京戏散场之后。

如果有谁熬过冬天的长夜，身上衣衫单薄，室内没有火炉，那窗外朔风像尖刀似地刺透窗棂，那飘洒的夜雨变成了在瓦垄上跳动的雪珠；十二点钟以后，世界成了一座冰窟，人冻僵了，只有那紧缩着的心在一阵阵地颤抖。这时候，五分钱一碗的小馄饨，热气腾腾，可以添汤，可以加辣，那是多么巨大的引诱，多么美好的享受！

几乎是从头一天开始，我便成了朱源达的

customer. Later it became my habit that at the last sound of the Beijing opera gong, I would lift my eyes from the students' exercise books and wait to hear the warming sound of the clapper.

Zhu Yuanda's clapping was better than his father's. It was livelier and seemed at once both joyful and mischievous. Before long the clapper would be sounding beneath my window. "Eat, eat, come quickly and eat," it seemed to be calling. If I was a little slow, Zhu Yuanda would put down his pole and call up to me,

"Mr Gao, come down and warm yourself."

I would hurry downstairs to stand by his carrying pole, watching him fan the fire in the small oven and put the *wonton* in the pot while I listened to Zhu talk of the evening's business. He was very talkative; the words would flow in a stream, so that while you waited for your *wonton* you didn't feel the least lonely or anxious.

"Tonight's business was very good," he would invariably begin, as though sales never went poorly. "When the opera ended at least twenty people gathered around my carrying pole. And would you believe it, there wasn't enough meat stuffing. I'm not kidding you. The last few bowls had dumplings which were only half-stuffed.... Oh! Yours I set aside specially. They're stuffed with meat." He used a brass spoon to stir the *wonton* in the pot so as to prove this to me. "See, each one is bulging with meat."

I laughed as I said, "I don't care whether they're stuffed

主顾。后来成了习惯，每当京戏馆的锣鼓停歇以后，我便不时地把视线离开作文簿，侧起头来，等待着那使人感到温暖的梆子声。

朱源达敲过来了，敲得比他父亲好，有一种跳跃的感觉，显得顽皮而欢乐。快到我的窗下时，那竹梆子简直是在喊话："吃、吃，快点儿吃；快点儿快点儿、吃吃吃！"如果我的动作迟了一点，朱源达便歇下担子叫唤：

"高先生，下来暖和暖和。"

我慌忙下楼，站在朱源达的担子旁边，看着他投下馄饨，扇旺泥炉，听着他叙述这一晚做生意的经过。他的话很多，东搭西搭，一大连串，使你在等吃馄饨的时候不感到焦急，不感到寂寞。

"今晚生意很好。"他总是这样开头，好像他的生意从来就没有坏过："散戏馆的辰光，起码有二十个人围着我的担子转。急死人啦，肉馅儿不够！不瞒你说，那最后的几碗馄饨，肉馅只有一半……呃，你这一碗是特意留着的，肉包得很多。"他用铜勺搅动着锅里的馄饨，向我证明："你看，一个个都是胖鼓鼓的。"

我笑着说："不管你肉多肉少，我只要多加辣椒！"

or not, you must add a few more hot peppers!"

Zhu Yuanda didn't miss his chance to add, "It's so cold. Would you like another bowl?"

"Okay. But you're sold out of meat stuffing."

Zhu laughed heartily, his eyes winking slyly. "It would be throwing away your capital if you were to sell *wonton*! When you're doing business, you've got to say that there's a limited supply of your product. Then people will snap it up. If you tell them that there's no meat filling left, then the customers will want even the pastry sheets!" Saying this he withdrew from a little cupboard an earthenware bowl of meat which he thrust before me. "See if this isn't enough for you!" He laughed, thoroughly pleased with himself.

I began to laugh myself. It was just like watching a magician gaily and deliberately giving away the tricks of his trade.

At that time I didn't think that Zhu Yuanda was doing anything dishonest or that he was putting his profits ahead of everything else. I felt that the reason I wanted to correct more exercise books and he wanted to sell more *wonton* was that our lives were so difficult. Every night he brought me a little warmth. If I was able to buy for his sake one more bowl of *wonton* we would be helping each other out like two fish in a drying pond trying to spew foam on one another.

After Liberation I got a job as a cadre in an educational department. Although I was still busy, I didn't have to stay up half the night. Although my salary wasn't much, I felt it

朱源达顺水推舟:“天冷啊!要不要再来一碗?”

“好的,可你的肉馅儿已经卖完。”

朱源达爽朗地笑起来,狡黠地眨眨眼睛:“高先生,要是让你来卖小馄饨,准定是蚀光老本!做买卖的只能说货色不够卖,人家就买得快;你说肉馅没有了,他连馄饨皮子都要的!”说着便从小碗橱里拿出肉钵,向我的面前一伸:“看,还不够你吃的!”他咯咯地笑着,十分得意。

我也笑起来了,好像看见变戏法的人很幽默地把自己的骗术故意说破。

那时候我不觉得朱源达有什么奸诈欺骗,唯利是图。我觉得他想多卖几碗小馄饨,就等于我想多改几本作文簿,都是为了那艰难的生活。他夜夜为我送来温暖,我能够多买他一碗,简直是涸辙之鱼相濡以沫。

解放以后我有了职业,在教育部门当了干部。虽说工作也忙,却用不着夜夜去熬灯火;虽

was beneath me to be having *wonton* dumplings at five *fen* a bowl. If I was returning home late from a Beijing opera, I would rather have noodles and shredded pork at fiffteen *fen* to say nothing of sitting ostentatiously in a restaurant than to be eating tiny *wonton* dumplings standing with hunched shoulders by the seller's stall.

Although the sound of the clapper would still pass nightly beneath my window it lost its sense of mischief and joy with the passage of time, though it still seemed to be calling, relating something. And I rarely ran into Zhu Yuanda. When he'd return home late at night striking his clapper, I would be deep in sleep. If I did by chance catch that "duo, duo" sound, it would still be a feeling of warmth in my somnolence, though it would be very faint and far away.

It was probably sometime after 1958 when being obliged to queue up at a noodle shop I suddenly recalled what I hadn't heard for a long time — the sound of that clapper in the dead of night. It seemed a shame, as though I was missing something. But ever since the anti-Rightist movement, I could hardly dare to keep up my old attachments. I had not only to convince myself of this but also others. Socialism required a certain uniformity. It wasn't proper to have capitalist pedlars roaming the streets late at night. I was happy for Zhu Yuanda. He'd already broken free of his shackles and leapt into the torrent of the Big Leap Forward.

But things turned out differently. Zhu was no longer beating his clapper but carrying willow wicker baskets

说工资也不高，却对那五分钱一碗的小馄饨看不上眼了。如果看京戏回来晚了，街上有面馆，一毛五分钱一碗的肉丝汤面比小馄饨好，何况大模大样地坐馆子，要比站在摊子旁边，缩起肩膀捧着个碗体面得多！

那竹梆子的声音还是夜夜从我的窗下经过，那声音却因为时间的流逝而失去了顽皮与欢乐，又像在呼唤着、叙说着什么。我也很少碰到朱源达了，当他深夜敲着竹梆子回来时，我已经入了梦乡，偶尔听到几声笃笃，朦胧中还有一种温暖的感觉，但也非常模糊，非常遥远。

大概是五八年以后，到店里去吃面要排队了，于是我突然想起已经好久没有听到深夜的竹梆子，觉得可惜，也觉得少了点什么。但是自从经过反右斗争之后，我怎么也不敢恋旧，不仅要说服自己，而且要说服别人，社会主义应该整齐划一，不应该有个资本主义的小贩深夜游转在街头。我为朱源达庆幸，他已经挣脱了沉重的枷锁，投入了大跃进的洪流！

事情出乎意料。朱源达不敲竹梆子了，却

through the streets and lanes sneakily and in a flurry. In the spring he sold red bayberries, in the autumn water chestnuts and lotus roots; in the summer it was watermelon. In the winter he would set up his stall beneath the eaves of a house and sell roasted sweet potatoes. Sometimes he would sell cabbage, soyabean sprouts, live chickens, fish or shrimp. You could never know for certain what he would be selling. If someone in the courtyard had an unexpected guest, you'd always hear the housewife quietly ordering her busband to "run down to Zhu Yuanda and see what he's selling". I never bought anything from him and I wouldn't allow my wife or children to go. I believed that buying his things was aiding the spontaneous rise of capitalism.

I recall that during the mid-autumn festival one year the anti-Rightist inclination campaign became particularly heated in my department. I had just been engaged in a war of words with someone with a Rightist inclination. When I reached home, the moon had already passed its zenith. The scent of osmanthus flowers was floating everywhere in the city. The moonlight was like water. It felt very stange — the struggle was so intense while all around one everything was so delicately beautiful. It was as though the world was out of joint.

As I was crossing a little stone bridge, I suddenly noticed Zhu Yuanda at the other end of the bridge setting up shop. One basket contained cherry-red water chestnuts, the other tender white lotus roots. I stopped immediately. I really wanted to buy a few to take back with me. These are the

在大白天挑着柳条筐串街走巷，悠悠荡荡，形色仓惶，躲躲闪闪地，春天卖杨梅，秋天卖菱藕，夏天卖西瓜，冬天放只炉子在屋檐下，卖烘山芋。有时候还卖青菜、黄豆芽、活鸡和鱼虾，简直闹不清他究竟在贩卖些什么。院子里有人家来了不速之客，常听见主妇悄悄地命令当家的："到朱源达家去一趟，看看可有什么东西？"我从来不向朱源达买东西，也不许爱人和孩子们去，认为买他的东西便是用行动支持了自发的资本主义。记得有一年的中秋节，机关里的反右倾正进行得火热。我和右倾分子进行了一场舌战之后，回家时月亮已经升到了中天。满城桂子飘香，月色如水。斗争是如此的猛烈，景色却如此的幽美，我的心中有一种异样的感觉，好像这个世界的格调很不统一。走过一座小石桥的时候，忽然发现朱源达在桥头上摆的地摊，一筐是水红菱，一筐是白生生的嫩藕。我立刻停了下来，真想买一点回去，这

traditional delicacies of the mid-autumn festival. I hadn't seen them for years. But I hesitated because before me wasn't a state-run fruit store but a black market stall.

Zhu Yuanda came forward. "Comrade Gao. Why don't you buy a few to take away with you? See, they're very fresh. You can't get these at the state-run stores. They've a few but they can't compare with mine. You could hardly call theirs red water chestnuts. They'd break your teeth. They're all shrivelled up and they stink!" He gave his basket of chestnuts a shake to show that his merchandise was as good as his words. He was as talkative as ever, still looking for ways to get his customers to buy.

But the moment I began to listen, something seemed wrong. His patter was exactly like that of the Rightists in my department. It was slandering socialism! I didn't want to be engaged in a "struggle" with Zhu Yuanda. But I had to say a few words to help better the man.

"You should watch what you say in the future. You'd be wise to get out of these little business activities as soon as possible. They're the roots of capitalism and they're all to be swept away very shortly!"

He was startled. "What! They even want to arrest us pedlars!"

"They won't arrest you, but sooner or later everything that smacks of capitalism will be abolished."

He began to laugh. "Relax. It can't be destroyed. There are people who want to buy and those who want to sell. If

是传统的中秋果品，不见已有多年。可是我迟疑着，因为眼前不是国营水果店，而是黑市摊头。

朱源达凑上来了：“高同志，买点儿回去吧。你看，多新鲜，这东西现在国营商店里买不到，就是有一点，跟我的货色也不能比。他那是什么水红菱呀，老的咬不动，嫩的干瘪得有臭味！”朱源达把菱筐颠簸了一下，表示他的货色是表里如一。他的话还是那么多，还是变着法儿叫人买他的东西。

我一听，唔！气味不对。他的论调和机关里的那个右倾分子简直如出一辙，污蔑社会主义！我不想斗争朱源达，但是得开导他几句，也是与人为善：

“你呀，以后讲话要注意。这种小买卖嘛，还是乘早歇手，这是资本主义的细胞，很快要被消灭！”

朱源达一惊：“怎么，要抓小贩啦？”

“不是抓，资本主义性质的东西，迟早要被消灭。”

朱源达笑起来了：“你放心，消灭不了的。

the state-run stores won't sell things, can you say capitalism will be abolished?"

"How can it be abolished! Chiang Kai-shek's armies of millions were swept away. They would think nothing of little shops and stalls like yours!" I had often used this gambit at struggle meetings. No one could resist its devastating logic.

Zhu Yuanda made a sweeping bow. "Of course, Comrade Gao, I'm an ignorant man. I know nothing of the ways of the world. I'll take you as my guide from now on." Saying this, he quickly shouldered his baskets and left as though he feared I would arrest him.

As I watched him stagger away from me, I felt a little regret. There was a taste of ashes in my mouth. Those years ago standing by his carrying pole eating *wonton*, how could I have thought that he would be swept away. We had formed a genuine affection. As Zhu Yuanda slowly disappeared, I simply couldn't understand how this great distance between us had come about.

I longed to run into Zhu again, to smile and nod my head at him, to say a few pleasant words to him to show that our friendship was still alive. Unexpectedly, it was he who came to see me. He carefully seated himself in my rattan chair and eyed the furniture approvingly.

"Comrade Gao, you're doing all right now. I can remember that year when you were sick and you asked me to bring up a bowl of *wonton* for you. All you had then was a plank bed and a broken-down desk. It was pitiful!"

有人愿买，有人愿卖，国营商店里又不卖，你看怎么消灭？”

“怎……怎么消灭呀，蒋介石八百万军队都消灭掉了，还在乎什么小商小贩的！”这种话是我在斗争会上常用的杀手锏，说起来带有很浓的火药味，是任何人都招架不了的。

朱源达连忙点头哈腰：“是是，高同志，我是无知无识的人，不懂世面，今后还请你多照顾。”说着，慌忙挑起担子往回走，生怕我会抓他似的。

看着朱源达踉跄而去的背影，我有点后悔，心里也不是滋味。当年站在他的担子旁边吃小馄饨，怎么也没有想到要把他消灭，而且还结下了一定的友谊。朱源达渐渐地走远了，我弄不明白，我和他之间的距离是怎样产生的。

我很想再碰到朱源达，向他笑笑，点点头，说几句平和的话，表明友谊还是存在的。想不到朱源达却跑到我的楼上来了，很拘谨地坐在藤椅子上，打量着我房间里的陈设：“高同志，你现在好了，记得那年你生病，叫我送一碗馄饨上楼，那时候你只有一张板床，一张破台子，真可怜。”

I remembered this not without some grateful laughter. But I was thinking to myself, "Why has he come to see me?" To tell the truth, ever since the anti-Rightist movement, I had become afraid of keeping up intimate relationships with almost everyone, lest I stir up trouble where I would have difficulty defending myself.

But Zhu was very good at guessing your meaning from your face, so he quickly explained his reason for coming.

"Comrade Gao, I had no other choice. You're the only one I know who has a way with words. I've come to ask you to write something for me."

"Write something!" I was even more afraid of putting something in writing.

"A self-criticism."

That was better. I could do that for him. "What are you accused of?"

"Profiteering. What else could it be!" He said this very easily as though it meant nothing to him.

I sighed, "And selling at exorbitant prices too!"

"Actually you could hardly call them exhorbitant. I buy my shrimps at forty *fen* a catty and sell them at sixty. Take into account I'm up half the night running around for sixty *li* and all I earn is two or three yuan. I know you won't like to hear this, but you earn more than I do and all you do is sit around and shoot the breeze."

This made me very uncomfortable. "How can you make a comparison like that. We serve the people. You just earn

我记起这件事来了，不无感激地笑笑，但是心里却在盘算："他来找我有什么事情?"说老实话，自从反右以后，我和差不多所有的人都怕作私下往来，以免惹出点什么事，有口难辩。

朱源达很会鉴貌辨色，连忙说明来意："高同志，实在没有办法，在我认识的人当中，只有你是懂文墨的，所以来请你写个东西。"

"写什么?!"我对落笔更害怕。

"检讨。"

还好，写检讨可以。"检讨什么呢?"

"投机倒把呗，其他能有什么东西。"朱源达说得很轻飘，无所谓。

我叹了口气："又卖高价啦!"

"其实也不算高价，我买来的虾每斤四角，卖出是六角。三十里路还要蚀掉一斤秤，算下来熬了一夜天，跑了六十里，也不过赚了两三块钱。说句不好听的话，你们在办公室漫谈一天，还要比我多赚点。"

我听了很不舒服："这怎么好比呀，我们是

money for yourself!"

He wasn't convinced. "I don't serve the people? If I don't serve them, how is that they have shrimps to fry?"

My goodness! This strange reasoning had to be refuted. I stood up and jabbing my finger at him said, "You serve the people when you sell at the proper price. It's profiteering when you sell at high prices. This is a very serious matter!"

Zhu suddenly woke up to the situation he'd gotten himself into. He was like a ballon with all the air gone out of it.

"Sure, comrade, but you don't understand business. You don't understand prices. If you're talking about quality goods at fair prices, well, the vegetable market doesn't have any. Those list prices they hang up there are just to fool you. They're lies!"

"How dare you!..." I had learned my lesson from our last encounter so I did my best to keep myself under control but in spite of myself I lunged forward blustering.

Zhu Yuanda immediately clasped his hands in the traditional manner of submission.

"Okay, okay. I won't say another word. Just please write the self-criticism for me."

For a moment I had him. "If you've done nothing wrong, what's there to criticize? I refuse to do it!"

Zhu grasped my sleeve; then from a pocket he pulled out a wrinkled sheet of paper.

"Don't be angry. I was mistaken. I'm a capitalist! Write what you like; dress it up a little! I've known you, old

为人民服务，你是为了自己赚钱！”

朱源达也不服：“我不是为人民服务呀？我不服务他那油锅里有虾炸吗？”

咦！这是什么歪理，必须予以反击。我站起身来，指指戳戳地说：“你卖官价就是为人民服务，卖高价就是投机倒把的行为，这个问题是很严重的！”

朱源达突然意识到他所处的地位，像皮球泄了气：“好同志哎，你不做买卖，不懂价钱。货真才能价实，菜场里根本就没有货，那牌价只能挂在那里哄人，是假的！”

“你敢！……”我接受了上次的教训，把过分重的话忍在肚里，但还是向前跨了一步，气势汹汹地。

朱源达连忙抱拳打拱：“好好，我不说了，求求你，替我写个检讨吧。”

这下子被我抓住了：“你既然没有错，还写检讨做啥？不写！”

朱源达拉住我的袖子，从口袋里掏出一张揉皱了的纸：“啊啊，别生气，我错，我是资本主

friend, since I was in my teens."

This softened me. I sat down at my desk and took up my pen. But I couldn't help asking him, "Can you guarantee that you won't break the law again?"

"I...I promise. I promise you I'll be a little smarter next time." He winked at me as slyly as he did in his youth.

I was compelled to put down my pen and say to him earnestly, "Look, you've very intelligent. You're a very capable worker and you can put up with a lot. Why don't you become a labourer or a shop assistant? Isn't that respectable work? Why do you have to slither about like a rat?"

His face darkened. He sat dumbly in the rattan chair, his arms folded across his chest. It was a while before he spit out, "I... I can't."

"Why can't you?" I drew my chair over towards him and began my analysis.

"Selfish thinking is the main cause of all trouble. It's the root of all evil. Capitalism rests on that. You have to be determined to reform. Naturally, it isn't easy to switch from doing everything for your own profit to looking after the common good. It will be a painful transition. Take us intellectuals for example; our reform is particularly painful."

He was startled. "You suffer too?"

"Painfully."

"No, no. Don't be polite. You and your wife are both cadres. You draw a hundred yuan a month. You don't have to worry about the weather. You get your salary every tenth

义！随你怎么写都可以，写得高点！老朋友啦，我十几岁的时候便认识你！”

我的心软下来了，坐到写字台旁，拿起笔，可是不得不问一问：“你能保证下次不犯吗？”

“保……证……保证保证，保证下次放得机灵点！”朱源达对我眨眨眼睛，又像年轻时那么狡黠。

我忍不住放下了笔，真心诚意地劝说他：“你呀，人很聪明，手脚麻利，又肯吃苦，为什么不去做工，或者到商店里当个营业员什么的。哪样工作不受人尊敬？何必像个老鼠似地被人赶来赶去！”

朱源达的脸色暗淡下来，呆呆地坐在藤椅子上，双手交叉在胸前，半晌才吐出几个字：“我……不能。”

“为什么不能呢？”我把椅子向前拖了一点，开始替他分析：“主要是自私自利的思想在作怪，这是万恶之源，资本主义就是靠它产生的，要下决心改造。当然，从唯利是图变得大公无私，很不容易，是需要有一个痛苦的过程。就拿我们这些知识分子来说吧，改造起来也是很痛苦的。”

朱源达十分惊讶：“你们也痛苦吗？”

“痛苦得很哩。”

“不不，不要客气。你们夫妻俩都当干部，

of the month. If I could only exchange your sufferings for mine I'd be in seventh heaven!"

"Why...Why...Why don't you get a job? Workers....Cadres...." I was unprepared for his attack. I was babbling like an idiot.

"Get a job? Without knowing any of the tricks of the trade, how much money do you think I would earn in a month?"

"You'd earn about...about...about thirty or forty yuan."

Zhu jumped to his feet. "Comrade Gao, I have four children. And then there's my father and mother. Eight mouths to feed in all. What could I do with thirty or forty yuan? I'm not a despicable man, shamelessly thinking only of money, am I? You don't see my children crying from hunger. The old woman, her eyes full of tears. It cuts into your heart more painfully than a sharp knife. I'm... I'm ashamed of myself...." He choked back a sob and wiped away the tears running down his cheeks.

It felt as though cold water had been thrown in my face. It was as though I had been standing at the top of a high building looking up at the wide and beautiful universe when suddenly I noticed beneath me a dark mire, destroying my lofty feelings and dirtying my beautiful picture. I didn't dare say anything further. All I could do was to erect a barrier in my mind: this was an individual and temporary problem. There was no way I could find an out for this individual and temporary Zhu Yuanda. Nothing I could add by way of

每月能拿一百多，风不愁，雨不愁，到了十号发工资。要是能把你们的痛苦换给我呀，我就升到天堂里去啦！”

“哪哪……那你为什么不去做工，工人……干部……”我没防着朱源达来这一手，简直有点语无伦次。

“我去做工，一窍不通，一月能拿几个钱？”

“拿……拿……拿三、四十块总可以的。”

朱源达跳起来了：“高同志呀，我有四个孩子，再加上父母，一家八口人，这三、四十块够养活谁？难道我是天生的贱货，不要脸，只要钱！你没有看见过啊！孩子饿得哭，老婆淌眼泪，那比尖刀剜心还疼啊！我……我直不起腰，抬不起头……”朱源达哽住了，刷刷地流下了眼泪。

我好像被兜头泼了一盆冷水；好像站在高楼上放眼明媚的大千世界时，突然看见就在楼下还有一块阴暗潮湿的地面，它破坏了人们的豪情，弄脏了美丽的画面。我不敢多想，只能在思想上筑起一堵高墙：这是个别的，暂时的。对这个别而又暂时的朱源达，我又无法替他找到

consolation. I was obliged to write a hurried and confused self-criticism and stuff it in his hand.

From then on I released my wife and children from their ban, allowing them to buy things from Zhu Yuanda. I felt that Zhu couldn't become a capitalist. If I could be counted a member of the proletariat, then how could he, being poorer and more wretched than I, be considered a capitalist? During the difficult periods when the free markets were permitted, I rejoiced for Zhu Yuanda. At that moment I knew for certain that he couldn't be a capitalist. But right afterwards there was a movement to adhere to the principles of class struggle. Then I would be confused. He really was a capitalist! I was in a terrible muddle. And then a thunderclap split the earth. The bugles of the "cultural revolution" were sounded, announcing the end of all capitalism!

It was altogether unjust. Now it was my turn to be publicly criticized and denounced because I believed that one should work hard for one's monthly salary, not always be spouting jargon, and that each person must make up his own mind. This had become pushing an extremely reactionary capitalist line. I was angry. Fine. From now on I would be indistinguishable from the masses. I would be like everyone else.

I mingled with the crowds. I read the "big character posters", watched the search and seizures, the public denunciations and the parading through the streets of the accused. When I had seen a lot of this I grew alarmed — this

出路，无法对他加以安慰，只好迅速地、含糊其词地为他写了个检讨塞在他的手里。

从此我对爱人和孩子撤消了禁令，让他们去向朱源达买东西。我觉得朱源达不会成为资本家，如果我算是无产阶级的话，他这个资产阶级怎么会比我还要穷和劳累？困难年月开放自由市场，我为朱源达高兴，这下子明确了，他不算是资本主义；紧接着又抓阶级斗争，这下子又糊涂了，他好像还是资本主义！含含糊糊拉倒吧！平地一声惊雷！“文化大革命”吹响了进军的号角，要消灭一切资本主义！

实在是冤枉，我也挨了一顿批斗，因为我觉得每月拿了工资，总得努力办事，也不能老是等因奉此，个人总得拿点主意，这就成了积极推行资反路线。我心里有气，好，从此以后混在人群里，十个指头一样齐。

我混在人群里看大字报，看抄家、游街和批斗。看多了也心慌，总觉得不像是在过日子

was no way to live. It was better in the small lanes where it was a little more peaceful. There life flowed on like a river. So every day I avoided the big streets and chose instead the laneways.

Litte by little the big character posters began to appear there too. But they weren't very striking. The paper was rather small and the characters were all higgledy-piggledy. It cost so much effort to read these posters that one paid little attention to them. Later when I did look at them more closely I realized how strange their contents were. There wasn't anything like "reactionary capitalist line", "horrifying massacre of the oppressed" or "cruel suppression." They were all down to earth. Who had beaten whom? Who had thrown dirty water into so-and-so's courtyard? Who had had a child out of wedlock and with whom? Who was having a love affair with whom? They employed the most awful language. And they used terms like "ruthless" and "shameful" .... My heart sank after I read them. It was as though I had been watching countless people pulling at one another's hair and thrashing one another. And it was all for nothing. Sooner or later there would be a verdict on the political questions, but how could all this feuding ever be settled? I had no appetite to continue reading. I turned and started east, passing in front of Zhu Yuanda's door.

It was wide open. There wasn't a rear window so the interior of the main room was dimly lit. I was suddenly given a terrible start. Standing on a bench in the poorly lit room was

似的。还是小巷子里安静些，生活还像河水似地向前奔流。所以每天上下班便不走大街，穿着小巷跑来回。

小巷子里慢慢地也出现了大字报，但都很不醒目，纸不大，字也写得歪歪斜斜，看起来很吃力，所以也不曾注意。后来仔细一看，内容十分奇异！其中没有什么资反路线、残酷镇压、惊人惨案等等的东西，都是些十分具体的事情：谁曾经打过人，谁在楼上把污水倒在人家的天井里，谁和谁曾经养过私生子，谁又和谁轧姘头。而且也用了极其可怕的词句，什么无情镇压、荒淫无耻、勒令交代……我看了心情沉重，仿佛看到这里也有无数的人在互相揪着头发厮打，起因都是鸡毛蒜皮。政治迟早会作出结论，这私仇怎么了结！我不想再看下去，转身东拐，经过了朱源达家的门口。

朱源达家的大门敞开着，他家没有后窗，堂屋里昏昏地。我突然大吃一惊，只见朱源达在昏暗之中立在一张长板凳上，垂手低头，好

Zhu Yuanda, his arms hanging at his sides, his head lowered as though he were suspended there from something. His head was half shaved, his left cheek a dark purple, his eye above swollen to the size of a walnut. Next to the door had been stuck up a sheet of white paper on which was written, "Evidence of Capitalism — Zhu Yuanda must bow his head and admit to his crimes! He has twenty-four hours to turn over the offending tools!"

He didn't notice me. I didn't dare watch him any longer because I didn't know to whom he was obliged to confess his crimes. Was it to me? Although I hadn't the skill to mend the heavens, I felt a twinge of conscience.

I skipped quickly passed Zhu's house. I looked about again and noticed the white sheets of paper next to the doorways of the flatbread pedlar, the hot water hawker, the itinerant barber and the cobbler. The contents of the texts were the same and they all bore the signature, "Combat Unit to Smash Dens of Evil". I felt that something terrible was in the air — that Zhu Yuanda had landed himself in a dreadful fix. The "cultural revolution" was bent on digging up all the bad soil of capitalism. If it didn't uproot Zhu Yuanda, then who would it?

And so it happened. Twenty-four hours later along came a gang of the "evil den smashers". Some were carrying iron clubs. Others, in imitation of the wandering knights of old, had great shining knives at their waists with a piece of red silk tied at the handle. The children of the lane followed

像被吊在那里。他的头发被剃掉了一半，左颊青紫，左眼肿得像核桃似的。门旁贴了一张白纸，上写：资本主义黑窝，朱源达必须低头认罪！限二十四小时内交出犯罪的工具！

朱源达没有看见我，我也不敢多看朱源达，因为我不知道他应该向谁低头认罪。向我吗？我补天无术，问心有愧！

我匆匆地掠过朱源达家。再一看，那些在巷子里卖大饼的，开老虎灶的，摆剃头摊的，绱鞋子的，家家门前都有一张白纸，内容相同，署名都是"捣黑窝战斗队"。我感到事情不妙，朱源达要沉没在这一场灾难里了！"文化大革命"要铲除一切资本主义赖以产生的土壤哩，不铲他朱源达铲谁？

果然不错。二十四小时之后来了一帮捣黑窝的。有的拖着铁棍，有的仿照江湖奇侠的样子，一把系着红绸的明晃晃的大刀斜插在腰眼里。巷子里的孩子们闹嚷嚷地跟在后面：

closely at their heels shouting. "House search. Come and watch the house search!"

I hesitated a long while upstairs. Should I go and watch or not? According to the self-protective "principles" of the times it was best not to get involved in such questions of right and wrong. But I had to take a look. They were going to a poor pedlar's house; what could they confiscate there?

By the time I arrived the combat unit had already gone into action. This wasn't like the search and seizure of a cadre's home nor like that of an intellectual's. When they searched those places the emphasis would be on the "four olds", documents, letters, diaries, manuscripts and things like that. And those whose homes were being srearched would stand silently to one side, sadly and indignantly watching the work of a lifetime, precious keepsakes, the wisdom of mankind all go up in smoke. And as the incarnation of evil did its work, it did so draped in a solemn cloak.

But the search and seizure at Zhu Yuanda's house was altogether different. That scene was absolutely terrifying. Even from a distance you could hear the crying and the wailing, the sound of things being smashed and torn and the shouting of the morale boosting slogans.

Zhu's house had become a battle ground. Inside, the din was deafening. Clouds of dust were being blown outside. The willow wicker basket was tossed outside and hacked to pieces by the great knives. This was because it had been an instument of crime. It had been used to sell chestnuts and

“抄家啦，看抄家去！”

我在楼上犹豫了半晌，去看看呢，还是不去？按照当时的防身之道，最好是不要单独涉足这种是非之地。可是我忍不住要去见识一下，他们到一个贫困的小贩家抄什么东西？

等我到达的时候，战斗队已经开始了战斗。这不像抄老干部的家，也不像抄知识分子的家。抄这些人的家时，着重点是四旧、信件、日记、原稿之类。而被抄的人往往是默默地站在一边，用一种悲愤的目光看着自己毕生的事业、珍贵的纪念、人类的智慧消失在烟尘里。那邪恶的化身在行动时，毕竟还披着一件庄严的外衣。

抄朱源达的家可不同啊，那场面是十分惊心动魄的。老远便听见哭喊、喧嚷、呼唤、嚎叫、杂物的破碎和折裂，还有壮胆助威的口号声……朱源达家成了格斗场，里面打的乒乓山响，一团团的灰尘喷到大门的外面。柳条筐被抛出来了，用大刀斩得粉碎。因为这是犯罪的工具，用它卖过菱藕。菜篮也逃不了，拎过鱼虾

lotus roots. Neither did the vegetable basket escape. It had been used to carry fish and shrimps. One after another pots and basins flew out the door and were smashed to smithereens on the stones of the street. These things had all been used in making bean sprouts. For some unknown crime a tin bucket was battered by an iron club. Zhu's wife and children would shriek everytime an item was snatched up. The wicker basket that the children clung to so desperately was something that had kept them alive. Zhu's wife hugged the earthenware bowl. Inside were green beans she had been keeping to sell. There was a great cacophony of sound as they fought, bleeding and rolling around on the ground. I couldn't believe my eyes. How could such a noble theory produce such piracy as this!

Finally the *wonton* carrying pole was dragged out. Zhu Yuanda was pursuing it like a madman. "Help! Spare that thing!"

How well I knew that *wonton* carrying pole. It had always provided warmth and a full stomach and it had never committed a single crime. On the contrary, it was a thing of exquisite workmanship. It was a miniature portable kitchen complete with cupboards, water tanks, wood shed, water canisters kept hot by surplus heat and storage compartments for salt, oil and spices. One could profitably study it in designing a galley for an airplane. I actually thought of walking straight over there and rescuing the priceless artifact. But I didn't have the courage. All I could do was stand and

的。缸盆一只只地飞出来，在石街沿上摔成十八片，这些东西都是做过黄豆芽的。铅桶不知何罪，也被铁棍敲瘪。每抢出一件东西，便是一阵孩子的哭声，妻子的嚎叫。孩子们死命的拖住柳条筐，这是他们活命的东西；妻子紧抱着瓦盆，这里面还有舍不得吃的绿豆。争夺啊，厮打，翻滚，流血；哭声和吼叫声混成一片！我简直不敢相信自己的眼睛，堂皇的理论怎么会制造出海盗的行为！

馄饨担子终于被拖出来了；朱源达像疯子似地在后面追："救命呀，饶了它吧！"

我多么熟悉这副馄饨担啊，我知道它一生除掉给人以温饱外，没有犯过什么罪。何况它本身是那么精致、小巧，有碗橱、有水缸、有柴房、有利用余热的汤罐、有放置油盐佐料的地方，简直是一座微型的活动厨房，如果在飞机上设计一个餐室，它都有参考的价值。我真想挺身而出，来保护这并不值钱的文物，可是我没有胆量，只能看着竹片在大刀和铁棍下飞扬。

watch as the bamboo splinters flew under the blows of the great knives and the iron clubs.

Once the capitalist den was no more, it was all over. No one came and pestered Zhu Yuanda about a self-criticism. The storm passed quickly. But no one knew how he was going to make a living.

After dusk about three days later I saw Zhu's wife leading along their four children. There was a length of string in each of their hands. At dawn the five of them returned one after the other. Each had a great bundle of waste paper tied to his or her back. Those large character posters that had been posted up all over the place had been quickly blown to the four winds and were bing trampled into waste paper. By picking up enough of it, you could earn four or five yuan a day. So it's true — Heaven does allow a way out! Who would have thought that those posters that had driven men insane and others to suicide could have rescued Zhu Yuanda from the flames? Life is truly a mystery!

While Zhu was nursing his wounds at home, I went to see him. He was as talkative as ever. He spoke a lot about the past. "Comrade Gao, I'm truly sorry. I should have listened to you in those days. During the Big Leap Forward my wife and I should have managed to get into factory work. You wouldn't have to worry about looking after the little ones, you just drag them to the union office and beg for help. The Communist Party isn't going to let you starve to death. Hell no! Why should I care about losing a little face. The skin of

黑窝捣完了也就完了，没人无休止地叫朱源达交代和检讨。这点倒也爽快，可是朱源达的生计却成了问题。第三天的黄昏以后，我看见朱源达的妻子领着四个孩子走过我的楼下，每人的手里都有一根绳子，天明时五个人先后回来，每人都背着一大捆废纸。大街上那铺天盖地的大字报，很快就成了四处飘荡，任人践踏的废纸，捡得多的每日能卖四、五块！真是天无绝人之路，谁也没有想到那些叫人发疯和自杀的大字报，竟能拯救朱源达于水火之中！事物的功过实在难以评说。

朱源达在家里养伤，我去看过他一次。他的话还是很多，讲起了许多往事："高同志，我真后悔呀，当初应该听你的话，趁大跃进的时候，夫妻俩都混到厂里去。养不活家小又怕啥呀，把孩子拖到工会里去讨救济，共产党不会饿死人的！该死，我何必爱那么一点面子，脸上

this face can hardly compare with money. Ai! I believed in myself too much. I always believed in bringing up my children by my own efforts. Things are fine now! My old woman and the children are out picking up garbage in the streets...." Zhu's words poured out of him. It was as though he were giving me a summary of half his life.

There was nothing I could do but give him encouragement. "Calm down. First look after yourself. Later... oh yes, the *wonton* carrying pole was destroyed. That's a shame."

At that time the newspapers were carrying the resounding slogan, "We have two good hands. Let's not loaf about in the city!" The rumour was that it was thought up by a city dweller. I paid no heed to a slogan invented by some city resident. But I watched carefully if cadres were to be sent with their families down to the countryside. I couldn't allow myself to be found in such lists. So I was scurrying about looking for army representatives and workers' propaganda teams. This silent struggle was absolutely terrifying!

Very fortunately, I wasn't sent down. Zhu Yuanda came to say goodbye, his eyes filled with tears. His entire family had been sent down to the most wretched place. It was then that I understood the meaning of "We have two good hands. Let's not loaf about in the city!" Who was it that was loafing about in the city? Of course those with no jobs. Zhu Yuanda could not be counted as having a job: He must then be in the loafing category. It was useless to try to turn to someone for

的肉是不值钱的！咳，我太相信自己，总以为凭自己的努力能把孩子拉扯大的。现在好了，老婆孩子都拉到街上去捡垃圾！……”朱源达一大连串地说下去，好像替自己的前半生作出了小结。

我只好劝他：“别急，先把身体养好，将来……哎，那馄饨担子砸了真可惜。”

这时候，报纸上出现了一个响亮的口号：“我们也有两只手，不在城里吃闲饭！”据说是哪个城市的居民提出来的。我对居民提出的口号不介意，只注意干部要大批全家下放，可不能把我也列在名单里，忙着去找军代表、工宣队，这一场无声的战斗也是十分惊心动魄的！

很幸运，我没有被下放。朱源达却含着眼泪来向我告别，他的一家被下放到最艰苦的地方去了。我这才明白“我们也有两只手，不在城里吃闲饭”的意义。谁在城市吃闲饭哪，当然是没有职业的，朱源达算不上有职业，应属吃闲饭之列，找谁讲都是没有用的。

help.

The two of us sat in silence. He regarded me with envy, I him with shame. I couldn't see in what respect I was stronger than he. I could avoid every disturbance. But for him there was no escape. Even if I couldn't avoid being sent down, my salary would remain the same.

Just before we parted, Zhu took something out of his bag and gave it to me. "Yesterday when I was cleaning up the mess I found this in a corner. It would be a shame if it were chopped up for firewood. I want to give it to you as a memento." As he said this he placed the bamboo clapper before me.

I received it in both hands. I studied it carefully. It was a semi-circulat bamboo clapper about eight inches long. It held no secrets. But in Zhu Yuanda's palms what wonderful sounds it produced. It had been caressed by generations of hands. The sweat and oil had penetrated the wood so that it now had a deep black sheen like a bronze mirror. Zhu gave it to me perhaps because he wanted me to remember that he had lived here and that he had done a little something for others.

Zhu and his family disappeared from the lane. Their departure was very noisy. There was a great beating of gongs as the banner "Glorious Household" was pasted up at their door. How could an "Evil Den" be transformed into a "Glorious Household"? In the twinkling of an eye, an old chicken had been turned into a duck.

我和朱源达对坐着，默默无言。他用一种羡慕的眼光看着我，我用一种羞愧的眼光看着他，我不知道哪一点比他强，每逢风浪来时我能躲让，他却无法逃避！即使我逃不了下放，那工资还是少不了的。

朱源达临走之前，从包里拿出一样东西，说："昨天收拾破烂的时候，在墙角发现了它，当劈柴烧了可惜，送给你做个纪念。"说着把那个竹梆子递到我的面前。

我双手接过竹梆子，仔细打量：这是一块六寸长的半圆形的毛竹板，没有任何秘密，可是在朱源达的手掌里却能发出那么美妙的音响：由于几代人的摩挲，手汗、油渍的浸染，那竹板乌泽发光，像块铜镜似的。朱源达把它送给我，也可能是要我记住他曾经在这儿住过，并且也曾经为别人做过一点事体。

朱源达一家从巷子里消失了，消失的时候很是热闹，敲锣打鼓地贴上了喜报，还有"光荣户"三个字写在旁边。黑窝怎么又变成光荣户了，真是眼睛一眨，老母鸡变鸭。

英汉对照
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Four other families in the lane disappeared at the same time. One was the cadre's while the others were the hot water hawker's, the itinerant barber's and the cobbler's. These were all in the loafing category. From then on you had to walk a mile to get hot water; it took twenty days to get your shoes mended. The old men had to queue up in the streets for a haircut. The old women would start cursing then, "Damn those who said they were loafing in the city. Now they've gone off to the countryside to loaf. You can forget about getting hot water to drink. Old man, don't bother about getting your haircut; just keep it in a pigtail!"

I heard no news of Zhu Yuanda for eight years. It wasn't until this spring that I heard that his two sons had been called back for work and had both been assigned to a certain factory. Later I heard that Zhu had returned. He sent a message through someone explaining he wanted to ask something from me. The moment I heard this I knew it had to be the clapper he was after. After all at this time everyone was talking about "social service" and the "commercial network", "hot water vendors", "*wonton* carrying poles" and what have you. Zhu Yuanda had returned, so of course he'd be returning to his old line of work. I got the clapper out and wiped it clean. I held it in my hands. In the deep gleam of the wood it was as though I could see the kindling burning in the red earthenware stove. I thought I could hear the "duo duo" sound reverberating at the end of the alley in the dead of night. Then it seemed to pause before a lamp-lit

和朱源达同时消失的，巷子里还有四家，一家是干部，其余的是开老虎灶的，摆剃头摊的，绱鞋子的，这都属于吃闲饭之列。从此以后，泡开水来回要走一里多路，绱鞋子起码要等二十天，老年人要理个发，也得到大街上去排队。老太太开始骂啦："是哪个没窍的想出来的，说人家是在城里吃闲饭，他们到乡下吃闲饭去罗，你也就别想喝开水，老头子哎，干脆留辫子吧，别剃头！"

朱源达一去八年，没有音讯。直到今年春天，听人说朱源达的两个儿子招工回来了，都分配在工厂里。后来听说朱源达回来了，而且托人带来口信，说是要向我讨一样东西。我一听便知道，准定是来讨竹梆子的。因为这时候人们都在谈论着社会服务、商业网点、老虎灶和馄饨担什么的。朱源达回来，当然要重操旧业。我把那个竹梆子找了出来，揩拂干净，放在手边。在那乌泽发光的铜镜里面，我仿佛又见到红泥锅腔里的柴禾在燃烧，又听到那的的笃笃的声音响彻在深夜的街头巷尾，停歇在一个

window. Inside perhaps there was a university student, or a young worker devoted to his studies, or perhaps a weather-beaten old man. They all feel keenly how much time they've lost and how little knowledge they have stored up in them. Their efforts are not for themselves alone. Their lives too demand that there be others bringing them warmth and convenience. It's taken me more than twenty years to learn this elementary principle.

It was dusk once again when Zhu Yuanda knocked at my door. My wife and he talked spiritedly as they climbed the stairs. The sound of their voices and of their footsteps were as joyful and as playful as the sound of his clapper in his younger days. Youth itself cannot last for ever, but its spirit can be recovered.

"*Aiya*! Comrade Gao. I've been back now for over a month. I've been busy finding a home and applying for a residence permit so I haven't had any time to come by and see you. And we couldn't be enjoying this day if we hadn't gotten rid or the 'gang of four'!" His resounding voice and exuberant facial expression were completely out of keeping with his former self.

I was very happy. I felt that he really had managed to free himself from his awful burdens. "Sit down," I said quickly.

He took a seat in the rattan chair and took out a pack of good cigarettes. Each of us lit one up. He inhaled deeply. Then out poured the story of his eight years in the country-

个亮着灯火的窗前。那窗内也许是一个大学生，也许是一个喜爱钻研的青年工人，也许是一个两鬓风霜的长者吧。他们深感失去的时间太多，而且又没有太多的库存。他们个人所作的努力不仅是为了自己的生活，可是他们的生活也需要有人送来温暖和方便。二十多年的时间，才使我明白了这个极其简单的道理。

也是一个黄昏，朱源达叩响了我家的大门，他和我的爱人说着话，一路嚷嚷着上楼。那声音和脚步都在跳跃，就像他年轻时敲的竹梆子，那么欢乐而顽皮。青春不能常在，精神却是可以返老还童的。

"哎哟哟，老高同志。回来一个多月了，忙着找房子，报户口，不曾有时间来看你。想不到啊，要不是粉碎了'四人帮'，哪会有今天！"朱源达的声音响亮，眉飞色舞，和当年的神态完全两样。

我看了欢喜，觉得他真的是直起了腰，抬起了头，忙说："啊，快请坐。"

朱源达向藤椅上一坐，抢先掏出一包好烟，一人一支，一一点燃。他深深地吸了一口，一大连串地叙述着他在农村生活的八年。那些

side. I knew this story full well. It had been no picnic. But as Zhu told it it all came off sounding like a victory for him. Even though he'd sold off all the broken furniture, he'd got a good price for it. When he was finished he cast an appraising eye over my place. He shook his head disapprovingly. "It's all the same. Why don't you make some changes?" There was a tone of contempt in his voice as he eyed my furnishings.

I laughed. "Things haven't changed but the man has."

"Sure that's obvious! If you don't change then how can life go on?" Zhu straightened his new clothes. "Look. Haven't things really turned out well for me? My two sons are back. They're in state-run units. The two girls are in the county now. In collectively-owned units. Then there's my youngest — the fifth; I want to see him go to university. Four iron rice bowls and one golden one. Everything's just right. And that iron club can't smash them!" Zhu laughed heartily. He was thoroughly at ease and pleased with himself.

I quickly put the bamboo clapper in front of him. "You'll be taking up your pole again. Congratulations on the reopening of your business!"

Zhu rolled his eyes as though he didn't get my meaning. Then his face reddened a little. He put the clapper I'd given him aside. " You... you... you're kidding me!" He was very embarrassed as if he was a sort of crude millionaire whose shady origins had just been exposed.

I added brightly, "No, not at all. It's permitted to go

生活我都知道，并不是牧歌式的，可是朱源达说起来样样都是胜利，即使卖光了破家具，也都是卖得了好价钱。说完了打量着我的房间，不以为然地摇摇头:“还是老样子嘛，怎么没有变?”那口吻是对我房间里的陈设有点瞧不起。

我笑着说:“东西没有变,人变了。”

“哪,还有说的,再不变就没有日子了!”朱源达把新上装拉拉直:“你看，我这不是一个筋斗跌到了青云里!两个儿子回来了,全民。两个姑娘在县里,大集体。还有个晚生的阿五呢,我要让他读到大学毕业。四只铁饭碗，一只金饭碗,只只当当响,铁棍子也砸不碎啰!”朱源达乐哈哈地,十分轻松,也十分得意。

我连忙把竹梆子送到朱源达面前：“你还是去挑馄饨担子,祝贺你重新开张复业!”

朱源达翻着白眼，好像不明白我是什么用意，跟着就是脸色微微地一红，把我那拿着竹梆子的手推到旁边：“你你……你这是和我开玩笑什么的!”他的表情尴尬,好像一个财大气粗的人突然被揭出了以往的瘪三行为。

我连忙声明:“不不，不开玩笑，现在允许个体经营了，生活也有这种需要，巷子里的人

into business for yourself, now. You're needed. The people in the lane have been asking after you."

Zhu raised his head. "They still expect me to work my carrying pole?"

I thought to myself: Of course that precious work of art had been destroyed long ago. You couldn't fashion a new one overnight. "Okay, then sell sweet potatoes. The old folks love that sort of thing. You can't get them nowadays."

Zhu Yuanda grinned and gave me a sly wink. "To tell the truth, the labour unit also approached me about going back to my old line. I humoured them a little. I'm already working in a factory although I'm a little unhappy with the job. Originally I'd thought of being the doorman. But they sent me to the workshop to sweep iron filings. I do a little sweeping and I get by. It's far less trouble and worry than baking sweet potatoes." Telling me his little joke was just like the time he thrust that earthenware bowl of meat in my face.

I didn't feel the least amused. I just sighed. "Why? If you don't take up your carrying pole then your son won't either. That would be a shame."

"A shame? Where's the shame in that?" He got up and straightened himself up. "From now on I'm not taking a backseat to anyone."

"But you never did. You were serving the people."

"Still 'Serving the People'! That was petty capitalism! It was to be abolished! I nearly gave my life for that 'den of evil'!" He'd become very excited all of a sudden. His voice

都在牵记你!”

朱源达把头一仰:“咄,还叫我挑馄饨担呀?”

我一想,对了。那像艺术品一样的馄饨担子已经砸烂了,一时也造不起来,便说:“那就烘山芋吧,那玩艺老少都爱吃,现在就是看不见!”

朱源达对我笑笑,狡黠地眨眨眼睛:“老实告诉你吧,劳动科本来也要我在里弄里摆个馄饨摊什么的,我给他们来了一点滑稽,嘿哈,已经到厂里报到啦,就是工种有点不满意。我本来想去看大门,他们却叫我到车间扫铁屑。扫就扫吧,混混也可以,总比烘山芋省心思,省力气。”他把这个小小的滑稽告诉我,就像当年把肉钵头伸到我的面前。

我没有什么幽默的感觉,只是叹了口气:“哎,何必呢,你不挑馄饨担子,你的儿子也不会再挑,真可惜!”

“可惜!有什么可惜的?”朱源达从椅子上站了起来,挺起腰:“从今以后,我不比任何人矮一头!”

“本来也不矮,都是为人民服务的。”

“还为人民服务哪!你忘啦,那是小资本主义,要消灭的,我差点儿把命都送在黑窝里!”朱源达突然激动起来,嗓音有点发抖,哆嗦着

was trembling. He shook as he took out the pack of good cigarettes. "Come, let's have another smoke. Let's not talk about all those awful things. I came here today to ask you for some review materials to help my son, the fifth one, to prepare for the university entrance exams."

I was certainly not opposed to someone going to university. I got together some mimeographed materials and put them in Zhu Yuanda's hands.

He thanked me effusively, and then said he had to be going. He asked me over to his place sometime. "Come on. Don't worry that you'll eat me out of house and home. The five iron rice bowls are refilled every month!"

The door below creaked as it closed. Unconsciously I opened the large window facing the street. It was as though I was looking for some *wonton* pedlar coming along with his steaming *wonton*. It was as though I wanted to hear that "duo duo duo" sound sweeping along.... But there was nothing. There was just Zhu Yuanda with the mimeographs tucked under his arm slowly disappearing into the night. I had been a little disappointed. But I hadn't dared say so in front of him. In these past years I and others had hurt him. We had attacked so much initiative. In the end all any one wants to do is to hold that iron rice bowl in his cupped hands and avoid trouble and worry. By the end of the month that iron rice bowl can never be very full. And the rice in the pot will never be enough to go around.

October13, 1979

Translated by Ralph Lake

掏出那包好烟："来来，再抽一支，别谈那种倒霉的事情。我今天是来向你找点儿复习材料，让我家阿五看看，准备考大学。"

考大学我并不反对，连忙找了几份油印材料递到朱源达的手里。

朱源达千谢万谢，向我告别。临行时再三邀请我哪天到他家去喝两杯："来吧，别怕吃不起，五只铁饭碗月月会满起来的！"

楼下的大门吱呀一响，我下意识地推开了临街的长窗，好像要发现一副冒着热气的馄饨担子移过来；好像要听到那笃笃的响声掠过去……什么也没有，只有夹着油印材料的朱源达，渐渐地消失在夜暗里。我有点失望，但也不敢对朱源达有意见。这些年来我和别人都伤害过他，打击过各种各样的个人努力。到头来大家都想捧只铁饭碗，省心思，省力气。那铁饭碗到月也不会太满吧，可那锅子里的饭却老是不够分的！

1979年10月13日

The Boundary Wall

Yesterday night there was a violent storm and a slight mishap occurred: The wall outside the Architectural Design Institute collapsed!

The collapse of the wall was not entirely unexpected. It was simply too old! In its hundred-odd years of history it had already collapsed and been rebuilt several times, but none of the repairs had been thorough and the result was that the thirty-odd metres of wall bulged and humped in sections of all different heights. It was likely to come down at any moment, let alone in the middle of last night's storm!

With the wall down things began to happen. Everyone felt the Design Institute had changed. It was like an old man who'd just had his front teeth pulled out: When he opened his mouth there was just a black cavern with nothing blocking the entrance, and his eyes and nose had shifted position too; or like a beautiful young lady suddenly turned into a shrunken-lipped old woman, ugly and awkward. But it was not just that it was an eyesore; the problem was that once the wall was down, this peaceful office suddenly found itself linked directly with the street outside. The innumerable crowds of pedestrains and surging tide of vehicles all seemed

围　墙

昨夜一场风雨，出了些许小事：建筑设计所的围墙倒塌了！

这围墙要倒，也在人们的意料之中，因为它太老了。看样子，它的存在至少有百年以上的历史了；已几经倒塌，几经修补。由于历次的修补都不彻底，这三十多公尺的围墙便高低不平，弯腰凸肚，随时都有倒塌的可能，何况昨夜的一场风雨！

围墙一倒，事情来了！人们觉得设计所突然变了样：像个老人昨天刚刚拔光了门牙，张开嘴来乌洞洞地没有关栏，眼睛鼻子都挪动了位置；像一个美丽的少妇突然变成了瘪嘴老太婆，十分难看，十分别扭。仅仅是难看倒也罢了，问题是围墙倒了以后，这安静的办公室突然和大马路连成了片。马路上数不清的行人，潮涌似的车辆，都像是朝着办公室冲过来；好

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to be charging toward the office, and the incessant clamour that now lacked a wall to keep it out poured directly in through the windows that in the heat of summer had to be kept wide open. People had to speak much louder than before simply to make themselves heard, serious conferences were disturbed by unusual sights on the street, and discussions of current events would be diverted a thousand miles from the topic to idle chat about a traffic accident that had occurred somewhere. People were unsettled, their concentration was upset, work efficiency was low and they became easily tired. The demands were unanimous: Get the wall rebuilt fast!

Next morning at the brief daily meeting, the director of the institute, Wu, made simple inquiries about how work was progressing, and ideas on routine affairs were exchanged. Needless to say the moment everyone sat down they started to talk about the boundary wall. Since the wall had come down, things had gone amiss, when they came to work they had the feeling something was not normal, like the confusion of the year of the earthquake. Someone put it even more ingeniously and said when he came to work this morning he'd walked straight past the gate. Seeing the heaps of bricks lying all over the ground, he'd thought it was the construction site next door. . . .

Director Wu rapped the table with his ball-point pen:

"Okay. Let's discuss the question of the wall. Frankly, I knew long ago that it was going to come down. It's only

像是坐在办公室里看立体电影，深怕那汽车会从自己的头上辗过去！马路上的喧嚣缺少围墙的拦阻，便径直灌进这夏天必须敞开的窗户。人们讲话需要比平时提高三度，严肃的会议会被马路上的异常景象所扰乱，学习讨论也会离题万里，去闲聊某处发生的交通事故。人们心绪不宁，注意力分散，工作效率不高而且容易疲劳。一致要求：赶快把围墙修好！

第二天早晨，吴所长召开每日一次的碰头会，简单地了解一下工作进程，交换一些事务性的意见。不用说，本次会议大家一坐下来便谈论围墙，说这围墙倒了以后很不是个滋味，每天上班时都有一种不正常的感觉，好像那年闹地震似的。有的说得更神，说他今天居然摸错了大门，看到满地砖头便以为是隔壁的建筑工地……

吴所长用圆珠笔敲敲桌面："好啦，现在我们就来研究一下围墙的问题。老实说，我早就知道围墙要倒，只是由于经费有限，才没有拆

been the lack of funds that has stopped it being pulled down and rebuilt long ago. But in fact it's just as well that it has collapsed. If the old doesn't go, the new can't take its place! Yes, we'll build a new wall. . . . " Director Wu took a sip of water. "But what kind of wall shall we put up? I'm no expert on construction, but I always felt the old wall was out of keeping with the character of our unit: like a master tailor wearing a tattered gown without any buttons. On principle the new wall must be original and unique, attractive and tasteful, must unify form and substance. . . . Let's hear everyone's opinions."

As far as the importance of repairing the wall went, Director Wu's introductory remarks were both overly solemn and somewhat loquacious. In fact all he'd needed to say was one sentence: "Everyone thinks about it — how are we going to fix the wall?" But that would never do; work at the Design Institute could not be oversimplified! The mention of construction invariably evoked a division into three factions: The modernists, whose special interest lay in research on modern multistorey construction, the conservatives, who found it difficult to think of anything but classical architecture, and an indefinable faction who would accept a *fait accompli*, but were opposed to all changes and frequently displayed tendencies of nihilism. Although Director Wu claimed he was a mere layman when it came to construction, he did, in fact, consider himself to be far from an amateur, for he understood a great many principles: He understood,

掉重修。现在果然倒了，也好。旧的不去新的不来，一百零八条好汉都是被逼到梁山上去的。嗯，造新的……”吴所长呷了口水，“可这新的应该是什么样子呢？我对建筑是外行，可我总觉得原来的围墙和我们单位的性质不协调，就等于巧裁缝披了件破大褂，而且没有钉钮扣。从原则上来讲，新围墙一定要新颖别致，美观大方，达到内容和形式的统一。请大家踊跃发言。”

对于修围墙来说，吴所长的开场白过分郑重其事了，也罗唆了一点。其实只需要讲一句话：“大家看看，这围墙怎么修呀？”不能，设计所的工作不能简单化！一接触土木，便会引起三派分歧：一派是“现代派”，这些人对现代的高层建筑有研究，有兴趣；一派是“守旧派”，这些人对古典建筑难以忘怀；还有一派也说不准是什么派，他们承认既成事实，对一切变革都反对，往往表现为取消主义。吴所长自称对建筑是外行，但是他自认对建筑并不外行，他懂

for example, practical economics, what was attractive and tasteful, what was advantageous to production, convenient for everyday life etc, etc. How to convert principles into blueprints was not his problem, but he couldn't neglect his role as a leader and so had to rouse the two factions to a debate in which they would both bring forth their construction plans. Director Wu would then select the cream according to his principles and pass it on to the nihilists to unify. This was because they had a notable peculiarity: When they couldn't reject something, they had a great flair for effecting compromise and were also able to convince everyone. This technique of turning hostility into friendship was really very profound. Although to begin with Director Wu seemed dilatory and hesitant, equivocal and wordy, in the end he would make one feel it was a case of a man of great wisdom appearing slow-witted, and one would appreciate his prudence and reliability. Rebuilding the wall seemed a small matter, but it was nonetheless construction work, and in addition it was going to be built right across the front door, so it had to be treated seriouly in order to avoid possible repercussions.

Perhaps Director Wu's opening remarks had sealed people's mouths, for the factions who should have begun the skirmish were temporarily silent, unwilling to reveal their firepower too early.

Director Wu was not worried. He turned to a young man seated in the corner and asked with a nod, "Logistics De-

很多原则。比如经济实用，美观大方，有利生产、方便生活等等。如何把原则化为蓝图，这不是他的事，但他也不能放弃领导，必须发动两派的人进行争议，在争议中各自拿出自己的设计方案，由吴所长根据原则取其精华，再交给取消主义者去统一。因为取消主义者有一大特点，当取消不了的时候便调和折衷，很能服众。此种化干戈为玉帛的领导艺术很深奥，开始时总显得拖沓犹豫，模棱两可，说话罗唆，最后却会使人感到是大智若愚，持重稳妥。修围墙虽说是件小事，但它也是建筑，而且是横在大门口的建筑，必须郑重一点，免遭非议。

也许是吴所长的开场白把瓶口封紧了，应该发言的两大派都暂时沉默，不愿过早地暴露火力。

吴所长也不着急，转向坐在角落里的一个年轻人颔首："后勤部长，你看呢？"

partment Head, what do you think?"

The so-called Logistics Department Head was in fact Ma Erli of the administration section. According to the principles of literature, in depicting a character, one does not necessarily have to describe his face, but in the case of Ma Erli it is simply essential, for he had come to grief several times in recent years precisely because of this face!

Ma Erli's face was certainly not ugly or sinister; on the contrary it was very good-looking. It was a plump oval with clear white skin, rosy cheeks and dimples when he smiled. His bright black eyes were particularly lively. Not bad, eh? If he'd been a woman he could have enjoyed its benefits for a lifetime. But unfortunately his face had got its sexes mixed and found its way on to the shoulders of a man, and the thirty-seven-year-old Ma Erli, an extremely capable and efficient administrator, had found himself with a bady face that did nothing to inspire people's confidence in his abilities! It was said that he was a victor in the field of romance, but when it came to some critical juncture, he invariably lost out. The sight of him filled some of the leadership with misgivings, they doubted that he could stand up to hardship and were afraid that he wouldn't be reliable in his work. And neither fear was completely groundless.

Ma Erli was always immaculately dressed. Even when he was going to the suburbs to plant trees, you wouldn't see him in sneakers or cloth shoes. He did as much work as anyone else, but there was never a speck of dust on his

所谓后勤部长，便是行政科的马而立。照文学的原理来讲，描写一个人不一定要写他的脸；可这马而立的脸却不能不写，因为他这些年来就吃亏在一张脸！

马而立的脸生得并不丑怪，也不阴险，简直称得起是美丽的！椭圆形，很丰满，白里透红，一笑两个酒涡，乌亮的大眼睛尤其显得灵活，够美的了吧？如果长在女人的身上，够她一辈子受用的。可惜的是这张脸填错了性别，竟然长在男子汉马而立的身上，使一个三十七岁、非常干练的办事员，却有着一张不那么令人放心的娃娃脸！据说他在情场中是个胜利者，在另一种事关紧要的场合中却老是吃亏。某些领导人见到他就疑虑，怕他吃不起苦，怕他办事不稳。这两怕也是有根据的：

马而立整天衣冠楚楚，即使是到郊区去植树，他也不穿球鞋，不穿布鞋，活儿没有少干，

clothing. This roused the suspicion that he'd been dawdling. If he'd worn working clothes and leather working shoes, army pumps or straw sandals all day and paraded up and down in them, the result would have been quite different: "This man is prudent and experienced, hard-working and plain living." Even if his work had been mediocre, they would have commented: "One's ability may be limited, but what counts is his attitude to work."

There were also grounds for believing that Ma Erli was not a steady worker. Relibility is often a synonym for slowness, but Ma Erli seemed unduly agile. He was like the wheel of a bicycle — set it in motion and it goes flying.

"Xiao Ma (or 'Little Ma', as everyone called him), two window panes have been broken; you'll have to do something about it."

"Okay. I'll fix it straight away."

Word was given in the morning and that same afternoon the new glass was fitted in place. No one could resist going and poking it with their fingers to see whether it was in fact cellophane, because although it was easy enough to go and buy ginseng, to buy a plate of glass was a difficult operation: even if he had been lucky enough to find some glass to buy, how could he have got the glazier to come and put it in straight away? There it was nailed in securely with the cracks puttied over... Oh no! They were just putting up a building next door! Don't say this slick customer had waited till they'd gone to lunch and then seized the chance to....

身上却不见泥污。这就使人觉得形迹可疑，可能是在哪里磨洋工的！如果他整天穿一身工作服，劳动皮鞋、军用球鞋、麻耳草鞋等等在人前走来走去，那就另有一种效果：“这人老诚持重，艰苦朴素。”即使工作平平，也会另有评语：“能力有大小，主要是看工作态度。”“态度”二字含义不明，形态和风度的因素也不能排除。

担心马而立办事不稳也有根据，因为稳妥往往是缓慢的同义语。这马而立却显得过分地灵活；灵活得像自行车的轮盘，一拨便能飞转：

“小马（人家都这样叫他），窗户上的玻璃打碎了两块，想想办法吧。”

“好，马上解决！”

上午刚说过，下午那新玻璃便装上了，这使人忍不住要用手指去戳戳，看看是不是糊的玻璃纸。因为目前买人参并不困难，买窗户玻璃却是一件很不容易的事：即使碰巧买到，又怎么能马上就请到装玻璃的工人，钉得四平八稳，还用油灰抹了缝隙……不好，隔壁正在造大楼，这油头粉面的家伙是不是乘人家吃饭的时候去……

Naturally all misunderstandings are cleared up sooner or later, but the cost is reckoned in time. Ma Erli had previoulsy worked in the Housing Administration Bureau. In his first year everyone had kept a wary eye on him, afraid that this sharp-eyed, nimble-fingered young man was going to slip up. The second year they discovered that he was extremely capable, but had to be kept tight control of. Capable people were frequently liable to go beyond the limits of what was proper; it was virtually a rule, In the third year, he was lauded from above and below and all kinds of work was piled on his head. In his fourth year his leaders all declared that he should have long since been promoted to deputy section leader and should have risen one notch on the pay scale, but unfortunately the deputies' positions had all been filled, and pay increases had been granted two years ago. There, at such a vitally important juncture, Ma Erli really came off badly, and the fault all lay with that baby face!

The head of the Housing Administration Bureau was a kink-hearted old man who didn't like to treat his subordinates unfairly, so seeing that Ma Erli would have difficulty getting promotion in his own office, reluctantly parted with his treasure and recommended him to Director Wu. He told him how capable Ma Erli was and said there was no question of it, he had the makings of an administration section chief.

Director Wu agreed to take him on, but as soon as he saw Ma Erli he became suspicious. "Can this kind of person stand up to hard work? Will he be reliable?" The unfortu-

当然，一切误解迟早总会消失的，可是需要用时间来作代价。马而立以前在房管局当办事员，第一年大家都对他存有戒心，深怕这个眼尖手快的人会出点什么纰漏。第二年发现他很能干，但是得抓得紧点，能干的人往往会豁边，这似乎也是规律。第三年上下一致叫好，把各式各样的事情都压到他的头上去！第四年所有的领导都认为马而立早就应该当个副科长，工资也应加一级。可惜那副科长的位置已经挤满了，加薪的机会也过去了两年。喏，在这种性命交关的地方马而立便吃了大亏，都怨那张娃娃脸！

房管局的老局长是个心地善良的人，他不肯亏待下级。眼看马而立在本机关难以提拔，便忍痛割爱，向吴所长推荐，说马而立如何如何能干，当个行政科长绝无问题。

吴所长答应了。但一见到马而立便犯疑："这样的人能吃苦耐劳吗？办事妥稳吗？"倒霉

nate Ma Erli began his second round of being tested....

Director Wu had asked Ma Erli to speak first, on the one hand to get everyone talking and on the other to test his basic training and his experience in running affairs. So he slightly inclined his head towards the young man and said. "Logistics Department Head, what do you think?"

As expected, Ma Erli didn't know how far he should go. On the basis of his work experience and personal affiliations at the Housing Administration Bureau, he briefly considered the bricks, mortar and labour required and said, "No problem. I can guarantee that wall will be up within a week!"

Director Wu gave an "Oh!" of understanding. He knew from experience what was going on in Ma Erli's head.

"You can't just consider the bricks and mortar; you have to think of the significance of the style of the wall to the character of our unit."

The word "significance" opened the floodgates and everyone began to discuss the significance of the wall, but their intentions went far beyond the question of the wall.

As expected, the topic was taken up by the erudite scholar of classical architecture, Huang Daquan. This old chap was a little naive, but there was no need to guess at his meaning.

"I raised this problem several times very early on, but unfortunately was unable to attract the attention of certain people.... The collapse of the wall this time is a profound lesson to all of us. In the course of past planning, we never placed enough importance on it, never imagined that a tri-

的马而立又开始了第二道轮回……

吴所长所以要马而立先发言，一方面是想引出大家的话来，一方面也想试试马而立的功底，看看他知不知世事的深浅，所以对着马而立微微颔首："后勤部长，你看呢？"

马而立果然不知深浅，他凭着在房管局的工作经验和人事关系，把砖头、石灰、人工略加考虑："没问题，一个星期之内保证修得好好的！"

吴所长"噢"了一声，凭他的经验可以看得出马而立头脑中的东西："你不能光想砖头石灰呀，要想想这围墙的式样对我们单位的性质有什么意义？"

"意义"二字把人们的话匣子打开了，大家都来谈论围墙的意义，其用意却都在围墙以外。

果然，对古典建筑颇有研究的黄达泉接茬儿了。这老头儿有点天真，他的话是用不着猜摸的："这个问题我早就提过多次了，可惜没有能引起某些人的注意……这次围墙的倒塌，对我们是一个深刻的教训。在我们过去的设计中，都没有对围墙引起足够的重视，没有想到

fling wall meant the difference between creating motion and creating stillness, meant creating a sense of security and unity. Now it's become obvious that the wall not only has functional value, but has a rich decorative signficance too. Its place in giving a unique style to a group of buildings is of tremendous importance. Director Wu was right; this is a question of how to unite form and content."

This speech seemed to have grasped the motives of the leader, but it was in fact made with a definite object in view. He first pointed out there were means to reach that object but was willing to let other people use them. He had his own partialities, but he didn't want to enter the fray. The moment the words were out of his mouth, everyone's gaze turned quietly eastwards.

On a long sofa in the east of the room sat Zhu Zhou of the modernist faction. He was holding a teacup in his hands, watching the speaker with fixed concentration and listening with respectful attention.

Huang Daquan's words flowed smoothly on without a break:

"As far as traditional architectural artistry went, our forefathers really understood the wonders that can be worked with a boundary wall. There are at least a dozen different kinds of walls — flowery walls, whitewashed walls, grey brick walls, high walls, low walls, open-windowed walls, 'wind and fire' walls, screen walls, hundred pace walls, cloud walls, dragon walls — each kind of wall had its func-

区区的一堵围墙竟能造成动与静的差别，造成安全感和统一的局面。现在看起来围墙不仅有实用价值，而且富有装饰的意味，它对形成建筑群落特有的风格有着非常重大的意义。吴所长说得对，这是内容和形式如何统一的问题！”

这番话听起来好像是对领导意图的领会，其实是有的放矢，他先把矢引出来，再让别人放出去；他有自己的倾向，但又不愿卷进去，他的话一出口，人们的目光便悄悄地向东一移。

东面的长沙发上，坐着属于“现代派”的朱舟，他双手捧着茶杯，注目凝神，正在洗耳恭听。

黄达泉接着滔滔不绝地说：“……从传统的建筑艺术来看，我们的祖先很了解围墙的妙用，光是那墙的名称就有十多种。有花墙、粉墙、水磨青砖墙；高墙、短墙、百步墙；云墙、龙墙、漏窗墙、风火墙、照壁墙……各种墙都有它

tional and aesthetic value. Most ingenious was the open-windowed wall: it not only created a division between motion and stillness, but could create stillness within motion and motion within stillness. It limited men's bodies but not their eyes. It's true to say that without a wall, there's no such thing as a group of buildings. A deep courtyard must have a high wall, otherwise where's the deep courtyard? Think of the Daguan Garden in *A Dream of Red Mansions*...." Huang Daquan had got himself roused and unintentionally wandered into the garden of the classic novel.

Zhu Zhou, sitting on the sofa, put down his teacup and immediately launched off from the Daguan Garden." Please note, we are not faced with the task of building a Daguan Garden. If we were about to restore the Old Summer Palace, Lao Huang's ideas would be worth consideration, but even then they could only be considered in part, because the style of the Old Summer Palace wasn't the same as that of the Daguan Garden. We have to consider this question from the point of view of practical realities. Although classical architecture has a very romantic flavour and can make us respect and cherish our own ancient culture, it's not feasible for application in practical work. The urgent task in hand is to build five and six storey blocks; I don't see what significance a wall even ten metres high would have for a six storey block!"

"It has significance!" Having mistakenly wandered into the Daguan Garden, Huang Daquan turned back. He was not

的实用价值和艺术价值。其中尤以漏窗墙最为奇妙，它不仅能造成动与静的差别，而且能使得动中有静，静中有动；能使人身有阻而目不穷！可以这样说，没有围墙就形不成建筑群落。深院必有高墙，没有高墙哪来的深院？你看那个大观园……”黄达泉讲得兴起，无意之中扯上了大观园。

坐在长沙发上的朱舟把茶杯一放，立即从大观园入手：“请注意，我们现在没有修建大观园的任务。如果将来要修复圆明园的话，老黄的意见也许可以考虑，但也只能考虑一小部分，因为圆明园的风格和大观园是不相同的。我们考虑问题都要从实际出发，古典建筑虽然很有浪漫主义的色彩，可以引起人们对我们古代文化的尊敬与怀念，但在实际工作中是行不通的。我们的当务之急是修建五层楼或六层楼，我不能理解，即使是十米高的围墙，对六层楼来讲又有什么意义？”

“有！”误入大观园的黄达泉折回来了，他

totally ignorant of modern architecture: "Even a six storey apartment block should have a surrounding wall, because apart from floors four, five and six there are also floors one, two and three. The boundary wall is chiefly for the benefit of the first two floors. The fourth, fifth and sixth floors make use of space to create the difference between motion and stillness, but the first and second floors use the wall to create an impression of distance."

The battle array of the adversaries lay exposed and the rest of the debate continued in phrases and sentences with no more lengthy exposition. It had become hand-to-hand combat.

"Please state clearly the distance between a building and its wall. There's really not that much space in a city."

"If the wall is right next to the windows, doesn't it block the air and sunlight?"

"Build an open-windowed wall."

"Open-windowed walls are 'motion within stillness'. Aren't you contradicting yourself?"

"They are also 'stillness within motion'. You didn't hear that part of it!"

"Just a minute. Please work out the costs for your open-windowed wall." The speaker pulled a calculator out of his back pocket.

Director Wu immediately rapped the table with his pen:

"Don't get too far off the subject. The important question is how to rebuild our own wall."

对现代建筑也不是无知的，“即使是六层高的楼房，也应该有围墙。因为除掉四五六之外还有一二三，围墙的作用主要是针对一二两层而言的。四五六的动静差是利用空间，一二两层的动静差是利用围墙来造成一种感觉上的距离。”

双方的阵势摆开了，接下来的争论就没有长篇大套，而是三言两语，短兵相接：

“请你说明一下，围墙和建筑物的距离是多少，城市里有没有那么多的地皮？”

“如果把围墙造在靠窗口，怎么通风采光呢？”

“造漏窗墙。”

“漏窗墙是静中有动呀，你这不是自相矛盾吗？”

“它在动中还有静呢，这句话你没有听见！”

“慢慢，请你计算一下这漏窗墙的工本费！”说话的人立即从腰眼里拔出电子计算机。

吴所长立即用圆珠笔敲敲桌面：“别扯得太远了，主要是讨论如何修围墙的问题。”

Zhu Zhou was not willing to surrender. As he saw it the conservatives had no way out and victory had to be followed by hot pursuit.

"We haven't got off the subject; this relates to the kind of wall we should build — whether we want an open-windowed wall or not!"

Director Wu was highly experienced in controlling meetings and never allowed anyone to throw off all restraints, so he immediately asked Zhu Zhou in reply: "In your opinion, what kind of wall should we build? Be specific."

"More specifically. . . ." Zhu Zhou was caught somewhat off guard because he hadn't got any specific suggestions and had only entered the fray for the sake of the argument. "More specifically. . . looking at the concrete situation, the wall has two main functions: one is to cut us off from the noise of the city and the other is to protect us. There's no one in the building in the evenings, only old man Hong who sleeps in the reception office and he's already getting on in years. . . ."

Zhu Zhou beat about the bush for all he was worth. He knew that the more concrete the proposal, the more easily it was attacked, leaving no room to defend oneself or escape.

Huang Daquan saw Zhu Zhou's predicament, looked at his watch and pressed him step by step. "Time's almost up. Where are the brilliant suggestions then?"

"To be more specific, the wall must be high and solid." Zhu Zhou had no choice but to reveal his ideas. But this

朱舟不肯罢休，他认为“守旧派”已经无路可走了，必须乘胜追击：“没有扯得太远，这关系到我们应该造一堵什么样的围墙，要不要造漏窗！”

吴所长掌握会议是很有经验的，绝不会让某个人随意地不受羁绊，他立即向朱舟提出反问：“依你看应该造一堵什么样的围墙？具体点。”

“具体点说……”朱舟有点措手不及了，因为具体的意见他还没有想过，只是为了争论才卷进来的，“具体点说……从我们的具体情况来看，这围墙的作用主要是两个。一是为了和闹市隔开，一是为了保卫工作。机关里晚上没有人，只有个洪老头睡在传达室里，他的年纪……”朱舟尽量地绕圈子，他知道，意见越具体越容易遭受攻击，而且没有辩白和逃遁的余地。

黄达泉知道朱舟的难处，看看表，步步紧逼：“时间快到啦，抛砖引玉吧。”

“具体点说，这围墙要造得高大牢固。”朱舟不得已，把自己的意见说出来了，可这意见

proposal wasn't exactly specific either — How big? How tall? Made of what materials? He didn't touch on any of it.

Huang Daquan was too impatient. He immediately cut in. "So according to you we need a steel reinforced, eight-metre concrete wall topped by an electric fence so that we can all sample the flavour of a concentration camp!"

"That'll ruin our image irrevocably, people will shrink at the sight of it. They'll think our Design Institute is an army ammunition depot!" somebody chimed in.

Zhu Zhou was angry: "I didn't say we had to build a concentration camp wall. Steel reinforced concrete and an electric fence on top were all your additions. Really! How can we discuss the question like this!" Zhu Zhou raised his eyes seeking moral support and continued:

"High and secure is right; if you want to talk about style then we should have a tall, soild wall with sharp-edged glass or iron spikes fixed on top to stop undesirable characters climbing over."

"Sharp-edged glass is the stupidity of those country moneybags. It's the equivalent of telling burglars: You can climb in over the wall, but just be careful not to cut yourself on the glass!" Huang Daquan answered back sarcastically.

At this everyone laughed and the atmosphere in the meeting room eased a little.

He Rujin, not being a member of either faction, had sat there all this time not uttering a sound. When the debate was most heated he took no part, but now that things had

也不太具体，多大、多高、用什么材料，他都没有涉及。

黄达泉太性急，见到水花便投叉：“如此说来要用钢骨水泥造一道八米高的围墙，上面再拉上电网，让我们大家都尝尝集中营的滋味！”

“那就把我们的风格破坏无遗了，人家会望而却步，以为我们的设计所是个军火仓库！”有人附和。

朱舟生气了：“我又没有讲要造集中营式的围墙，钢骨水泥和电网都是你们加上去的。真是，怎么能这样来讨论问题！”朱舟抬起了眼睛，争取道义上的支持。接着又说：“高大牢固是对的，如果要讲风格的话，我们这里本来就应该有一座高大厚实的围墙，墙顶上还须栽着尖角玻璃或铁刺，以防不肖之徒翻墙越户。”

“栽尖角玻璃是土财主的愚蠢，它等于告诉小偷：你可以从围墙上往里爬，只是爬的时候要当心玻璃划破手！”黄达泉反唇相讥。

一句话把大家都说得笑起来了，会场上的气氛也轻松了一点。

身边两派之外的何如锦，坐在那里一直没有发言。争论激烈的时候他不参加，事态平和

calmed down he began, "As I see it, all this controversy is superfluous. If the boundary wall hadn't come down, no one would have thought of open windows or broken glass. Everyone felt it was perfectly natural and suitable as it was. Sure enough it's come down now, but there's not a single brick missing, so the most reasonable thing to do is to rebuild what collapsed. Is it necessary to embark on a large scale construction project? A pure waste of money! Our funds are limited; we should always put economy first. Besides, the history of the wall has set precedents for us to follow."

If this had been said at the start of the meeting it would have certainly caused an uproar, but it had been opportunely timed. Everyone had argued until they were dizzy and no one was able to offer a concrete proposal that was acceptable to everyone. Listening to He Rujin speak it seemed as if they'd suddenly discovered the truth: He was right; if the wall hadn't collapsed there would have been no problem. Now it was down, simply rebuild it in the old way. It was just simple logic and there was nothing to argue about. The two factions nodded their heads and smiled as if an unnecessary misunderstanding had just occurred.

Director Wu gave He Rujin a disdainful glance. He didn't agree with this kind of negative attitude. His principle was to build a new, original and unconventional wall to add a bit of glory to the Design Institute. But time was already up and it would be difficult to get any substantial results from fur-

之后便来了："依我看嘛，各位的争论都是多余的。如果这围墙还没倒的话，谁也不会想到要在上面安漏窗，栽玻璃，都觉得它的存在很合适，很自然。现在倒了，可那砖头瓦片一块也没有少，最合理的办法就是把塌下来的再垒上去，何必大兴土木，浪费钱财！我们的行政经费也不多，节约为先，这在围墙的历史上也是有先例可循的。"

这番话如果是说在会议的开头，肯定会引起纷争。现在的时机正好，大家争得头昏脑胀，谁也拿不出可以通过的具体方案。听何如锦这么一说，好像突然发现了真理：是呀，如果围墙不倒的话，根本就没有事儿。倒了便扶起来，天经地义，没有什么可争的。两派的人点头而笑，好像刚刚是发生了一场不必要的误会。

吴所长向何如锦白了一眼，他不同意这种取消主义。他的原则是要修一道新颖而别致的围墙，为设计所增添光辉。会议的时间已到，再谈下去也很难有具体的结果，只好先搁一搁再

ther discussion — he had no choice but to lay the matter aside for the time being: "All right. We won't say any more about the wall today. Everyone goes away and thinks about it. The boundary wall is the exterior of the Design Institute. Things shouldn't be judged by appearances, but they can't be too ugly all the same. Please use your imagination; we want to build something unique. Meeting's over!"

Director Wu's words brought the two factions back to their senses. They felt that He Rujin's speech amounted to nothing; he might just as well have not spoken. Determined not to let He Rujin get away with it lightly, they chased him into the corridor and launched an attack:

"What you say sounds very masterly, old pal, but in fact it amounts to attempting nothing and gaining nothing."

"According to your logic, we can disband the Design Institute. Everything that already exists is reasonable. What is there to design?"

Director Wu, hearing the voices fade into the distance, smiled and shook his head. Turning his head he found that Ma Erli was still sitting in the corner by the door!

Director Wu was surprised: "What is it? You still have some problems?"

"No...nothing else. I'd just like to ask.... How *are* we going to rebuild the wall?" Ma Erli stood up, his large eyes opening even wider.

Director Wu smiled. He'd had the same experience himself as a lively and enthusiastic young man. Once there was

说："好吧，关于围墙今天先谈这些，大家再考虑考虑。围墙是设计所的外貌，人不可貌相，太丑了也是不行的。请大家多发挥想像力，修得别致点。散会！"

吴所长的话又使得两派的人苏醒过来了，觉得何如锦的话等于零，说和不说是一样的。他们不让何如锦轻松，追到走廊上对他抨击：

"你老兄的话听起来很高妙，其实是无所作为。"

"按照你的逻辑，设计所可以撤消。存在的都是合理的，还设计个屁！"

吴所长倾听着远去的人声，微笑着，摇摇头。回过头来一看，那马而立还坐在门角落里！

吴所长奇怪了："怎么啦，还有什么事吗？"

"没……没有其它的事，我想问一下，这围墙到底怎么修啊！"马而立站起来了，一双大眼睛睁得更大了一点。

吴所长笑了。他是过来人，年轻的时候也是这么活泼鲜跳的。心里搁着一件事，就像身

something on his mind, he would itch all over as if he had lice, wishing that he could remove all his clothes at once. But in fact most of the time it was quite unnecessary. Impatience only spoilt one's appetite and if you didn't let the lice bite, you might be bitten by a snake. With your clothes off you might catch cold. That was experience! But it was not appropriate to tell all this to Ma Erli — one had to encourage the positive side of young people.

"How we finally rebuild the wall will be up to you. I've already laid down the principles and comrades have already put forward several good suggestions. You can make a plan based on that. Rebuilding the wall is the responsibility of the administrative section, so I'm putting you in charge." Director Wu patted Ma Erli on the shoulder. "Do your best. You're in the prime of life and capable of doing a good job!"

Ma Erli was not very familiar with the procedure of making so-called "plans" and wasn't sure how much of a gap there was between "plans" and concrete actions, but he was delighted to be "put in charge" and felt that Director Wu had confidence in him. He hadn't been misled by his baby face. Work well for those who understand you. From now on he'd work even more enthusiastically.

Even when Ma Erli wasn't feeling enthusiastic he got things done pretty fast, but once his enthusiasm was roused his speed was phenomenal. Nevertheless this time he was really in earnest, so he first sat down in the office and lit a cigarette while he thought things through. Before he'd fin-

上爬了个虱子，痒痒得难受，恨不得马上就脱光膀子。其实大可不必，心急吃不了热粥，你不让虱子叮，就得被蛇咬，脱光了膀子是会伤风的，这是经验！这种经验不便于对马而立讲，对年轻人应该从积极的方面多加鼓励：

“到底怎么修嘛，这就看你的了。我已经提出了原则，同志们也提供了许多很好的意见。你可以根据这些意见来确定一个方案。修围墙是行政科的职责范围，要以你为主呢！”吴所长拍拍马而立的肩膀，“好好干，你年富力强，大有作为！”

马而立对所谓方案不大熟悉，不知道从方案到行动有多长的距离。听到“以你为主”便欢喜不迭，觉得这是吴所长对自己的信任，一开始就没有对他的娃娃脸产生误会。士为知己者用，今后要更加积极点。

马而立不积极已经够快的了，一积极更加了不得。不过，这一次他也郑重其事，先坐在办公室里点支烟，把自己的行动考虑一遍，一支

ished his first cigarette, he was on his bicycle pedalling furiously towards his old work unit, the Building Repair Centre.

The Building Repair Centre was in a dilapidated old building that made one feel that there were numerous buildings in urgent need of renovation. Content and form really were unified!

Ma Erli had been pedalling at a good pace, so he arrived just as their daily conference was dispersing and the director of the centre, a technician and several work group leaders were just walking past the lime pool. Ma Erli didn't even dismount at the gate. From across the yard he waved a hand and shouted, "Comrades, wait a minute!" By the time people had turned their heads to look, Ma Erli was beside them.

"Oh! It's you!"

Ma Erli had worked at the Housing Administration Bureau for five years and was familiar with all the people in the Building Repair Centre. For some reason his baby face was always welcome at this basic level unit. Everyone looked on him as a lively, capable younger brother.

Ma Erli jumped off his bicycle still puffing: "Thank Heavens I caught you, otherwise things would have had to be delayed until tomorrow."

"Xiao Ma, heard you've been promoted. Congratulations!"

Ma Erli wiped the sweat off his forehead, "There's no need for congratulations, but if you're willing I'd like you to

烟还没有抽完，便蹬起自行车直奔房屋修建站而去……

房屋修建站的房屋非常破旧，使人一看便觉得有许多房屋亟待修理，他们的内容和形式倒是统一的。

马而立的速度快得可以，当他赶到的时候，修建站的碰头会才散，站长、技术员和几个作业组长刚刚走到石灰池的旁边。马而立进门也没有下车，老远便举起一只手来大喊："同志们，等一等！"

人们回过头来时，马而立已经到了身边。

"啊，是你！"

马而立在房管局工作过五年，和修建站的人都很熟悉。不知道是什么原故，他的娃娃脸在基层单位很受欢迎，人家都把他当作一个活泼能干的小兄弟。

马而立跳下车来直喘气："可被我抓住了，否则又要拖一天。"

"小马啊，听说你高升了，恭喜恭喜。"

马而立撸了一下额头上的汗："少恭喜几句吧，有这点意思就帮我办点儿事体。"说着便

help me with something." He pulled out a pack of cigarettes and handed them round. "Let's sit down to talk — this isn't a simple matter!" To get everyone settled, Ma Erli took the lead and sat down on a pile of old bricks, not forgetting to protect his clean clothes by putting his hanky down first, despite his haste.

The technician sat down, and the director squatted in front of Ma Erli while the group leaders stood to one side smoking.

The director looked at Ma Erli with a smile, "Well, what is it that's got you so anxious?"

"It's not a particularly important matter — the wall at the Design Institute has collapsed."

"Is that all! You go back and we'll get it fixed for you — it's as simple as that." The director stood up. He didn't see anything remarkable in rebuilding a wall.

Ma Erli grabbed the leg of his trousers with one hand. "I asked you to sit down, so sit down. Listen to me. Fixing the wall is not so simple. The leadership has passed the job on to me. They want me to come up with some good suggestions. I'm hopeless by myself. I have to rely on you people to back me up!" He went on to explain all the details of the argument about the wall.

The director of the centre scratched his head. "This is not going to be easy. All *we* do is take responsibility for laying the bricks."

The technician smiled, "It's ture, the Design Institute

掏出烟来散，“喂喂，坐下来谈谈，这事情也不是三言两语说得清的。”为了稳住大家，马而立首先在旧砖头上坐下，百忙之中还没有忘记衣服的整洁，用块手帕蒙在旧砖上面。

技术员坐下来了，站长蹲在马而立的面前，几个作业组长站在旁边抽烟。

站长笑嘻嘻地看着马而立：“什么大事呀，把你急的！”

“事情也不大，我们设计所的围墙倒啦！”

“就这么大的个事呀，回去吧，给你修就是了。”站长站起身来，修围墙对他来说确实算不了一回事。

马而立一把拉住站长的裤腿：“叫你坐下你就坐下。听我说，修这座围墙并不是容易的事，领导上把任务交给我，要我拿主意。我有什么能耐呀，全靠各位撑腰呢！”接着便把围墙之争详细地说了一遍。

站长搔头了：“这事儿不好办，我们只能负责砌砖头。”

技术员笑笑：“是呀，设计所不能砌一般

can't put up an ordinary wall. This is a question of a signboard."

Ma Erli immediately seized upon the technician and wouldn't let go. He knew this technician had a lot of good ideas tucked away and was soon to be promoted to assistant engineer. "Right! Right, old pal, whatever happens I'm going to ask for your help in this. Next time you have to do something that needs a lot of running around, just make one phone call and I guarantee that within fifteen minutes I'll be there." Ma Erli's words were pointed: The year before the technician's wife had suddenly taken ill and it was Ma Erli who had arranged the car to take her to hospital.

The technician prodded Ma Erli in delight, "Get on with you! Whoever sends you running around is sure to come to grief — not to mention the fact that this is quite different from calling a car. It's hard to do business with the people at your place; they discuss things for hours and can't even set down limits."

Ma Erli's eyes flickered as he thought. "You can't say that; there are limits." His brain really was agile, good at sorting the main threads of a tangled affair. "They have several fundamental ideas. The first is it must be solid."

"Of course. It would never do to put it up today and have it fall down tomorrow." The technician picked up a tile chip and began drawing lines on the ground. He was a man who emphasized practical results and was adept at converting all kinds of demands into a workable blueprint —thickness,

的围墙，这是个招牌问题。”

马而立立刻钉住技术员不放，他知道这位技术员肚子里的货色多，很快就要提升为助理工程师："对对，老兄，这事儿无论如何要请你帮忙。下次再有什么跑腿的事儿，一个电话，保证十五分钟之内便赶到你府上。"马而立的话是有所指的，去年技术员的老婆得急病，是马而立弄了辆车子把她送到医院里。

技术员高兴地 捅了马而立一拳："去你，谁叫你跑腿谁倒霉。何况这事情跟弄车子也不同，你们那里的菩萨难敬，讨论了半天也摸不着个边。"

马而立翻碌着眼睛："不能这样说，边还是有的。"他的头脑确实灵活，善于把纠缠着的东西理出个头绪："综合他们的意见有几条：一是要修得牢。"

"那当然，总不会今天修好明天倒！"技术员拿起瓦碴在地上画线了，他是个讲究实效的人，善于把各种要求落实到图纸上面。厚度、长

length, a buttress every five metres — that would be solid enough.

"Secondly it must be a high wall, but not look like a concentration camp."

"Walls are usually the height of a man with hands raised plus 12 inches. There's no need to be higher than that." The technician wrote down "two metres high".

"Thirdly, it mush include open windows, etc., something attractive that lets the air through."

The piece of tile still in his fingers, the technician shook his head, unable to continue his drawing. "That makes it difficult. Open windows on top of a two-metre wall would make it too tall and a light top on a heavy base would not be attractive. But if the windows are less than two metres above the ground, the noise from the street won't be screened out and in addition you're just inviting passers-by to stick their heads in and have a look. Problems!"

Ma Erli waved his hand. "All right. Let's put that problem to one side for the time being. Fourthly, the wall must be burglar-proof, but can't have broken glass on top."

"Another problem!"

"We'll put that aside too. The fifth requirement is economy — it has to be cheap." Ma Erli patted the old bricks he was sitting on. "Hey! I can solve this problem. You can sell me the old bricks from your demolishing jobs. You can charge me a nominal sum for them — you usually have to *pay* to get rubble taken away!"

度、每隔五米一个墙垛，够牢的。

“二是要造得高，但也不能高得像集中营似的。”

“围墙的高度一般是一人一手加一尺，再高也没有必要了。”技术员写了个2字，高两米。

“三是要安上个漏窗什么的，好看，透气。”

技术员摇摇头，拈着瓦碴画不下去：“难了，两米以上再加漏窗就太高了，头轻脚重也不好看。砌在两米以下又不能隔断马路上的噪音，还会惹得过路的人向里面伸头探脑地，难！”

马而立挥挥手：“好，先把这一难放在旁边。四是要能防止小偷爬墙头，但又不能在墙顶上栽玻璃。”

“又难！”

“好，再放到一边。第五个要求是节约，少花钱。”马而立拍拍屁股底下的旧砖头，“喏，这个难题由我来解决，把你们拆下来的旧砖头卖给我，多多少少算几文，除垃圾还付搬运费哩！”

Everyone laughed. The old bricks piled here were all good grey bricks. Where was the rubble?

The director shook his head. "You're a sharp one. There's no easy deal that you're not into."

The technician was still puzzling over the problem points: "What! You still have more stipulations?"

"The general consensus is it's got to be original and unconventional."

"Well of course," the technician tapped the ground with his piece of tile, "the biggest difficulty is the open window, where should they go...."

A group leader spoke up, "Couldn't we put in hollow glazed bricks? We pulled down a great pile of them from old houses; they've been stacked over there ever since." He pointed to the west. "Look, if we don't get rid of them soon they'll be completely smashed to pieces."

The technician clapped a hand to his head, "Brilliant! Above one metre seventy-five we lay hollow glazed bricks — you've got your open windows and the wall's not too high. They're brightly coloured too. Lao Wang, go and get a block for Xiao Ma to look at. See if he likes it."

Lao Wang brought one of the blocks over. It was a foot and a half square earthenware decorative block, patterned with hollows cut through the centre and glazed a deep sapphire blue. Blocks could be put together as required to form open windows of any size or shape. They were frequently found in the inner courtyard walls of old buildings.

人们都笑了，堆在这里的旧砖都是好青砖，哪里有什么垃圾。

站长摇摇头："机灵鬼，便宜的事儿都少不了你！"

技术员还在那里考虑难题："怎么，还有几条？"

"总的一条是要修得新颖别致。"

"那当然……"技术员用瓦碴子敲敲地皮，"最困难的是漏窗，安在哪里……"

一个作业组长讲话了："不能安空心琉璃砖吗！我们去年从旧房子上拆下来一大堆，一直堆在那里。"作业组长向西一指，"喏，再不处理就会全部碰碎！"

技术员把头一拍："妙极了，一米七五以上安空心琉璃砖，又当漏窗又不高，颜色也鲜。老王，你去搬一块给小马看看，中意不中意。"

老王搬过一块来了，这是一种尺五见方的陶制品，中间是漏空的图案，上了宝蓝色的釉，可以根据需要砌成大小长短不等的漏空窗户，在比较古老的建筑中，大都是用在内院的围墙上面。

Ma Erli was naturally highly satisfied. Where could one go to find this kind of thing nowadays? But he still had to ask the question, "We'll be petty-minded first and lofty-minded later. How much do these things cost each? If it's too expensive we can't afford it!"

"Eighty cents each. How about it — it's as good as giving them to you."

Ma Erli slapped his thigh, "Terrific! Here, have another cigarette."

The technician waved his hand, "Don't hand out the smokes; your knotty problems have already been solved."

Ma Erli pushed the cigarette into his hand. "What, thinking of slipping off? You haven't worked out how to keep the thieves out yet!"

The technician laughed. "Old pal, that is a problem for the gatekeeper to solve."

Ma Erli was not willing to let it go at that. "People and walls are two different things; you're playing around with me."

"Fine, fine, I'll stop playing around. Director, you come in on this. Your place was burgled last year."

The director of the centre had in fact done quite a bit of research into theft prevention. "Xiao Ma, do you know what a thief is most afraid of when he climbs a wall?"

"Who knows! I've never robbed anyone."

"They are terrifed of noise. If you build a small roof on top of the wall with a roof ridge and overhanging eaves, then

马而立看了当然满意，这样的好东西到哪里去觅？可是还得问一句："我们先小人后君子，这玩艺算多少钱一块，太贵了我们也用不起。"

"八毛一块，怎么样，等于送给你！"

马而立把大腿一拍："够意思，来来，再抽支烟。"

技术员摇摇手："别散烟了，你的几个难题都解决了。"

马而立把烟向技术员的手里一塞："怎么，你想溜啦，还有怎么防小偷呢！"

技术员哈哈地笑起来："老弟，这个问题是要靠看门的老头儿解决的。"

马而立不肯撒手："人和墙是两码事，你不要跟我玩滑稽！"

"好好，我不玩滑稽，站长，你来玩吧，你家前年被偷过的。"

站长对防偷还真有点研究："小马，你知道小偷爬墙最怕什么吗？"

"谁知道，我又没有偷过。"

"他们最怕的是响声，如果在墙头上加个小屋顶，铺瓦片，做屋脊，两边都有出檐，小偷

lay it with loose tiles, the moment your thief gets on to it the tiles will go crashing to the ground with a noise that'll have him wetting his pants."

"Great! Far more effective than broken glass — thieves all wear gloves nowadays!"

The technician took it up from the aesthetic point of view. "Right! Flat topped walls are ugly too. It should have a hat — like a bamboo hat." He stamped out the rough draft he'd drawn in the earth and used the broken tile to completely redraw the whole boundary wall topped with a little roof with curved ridges. Finishing the drawing he tossed the tile away. "Xiao Ma, if this wall isn't a great success all round you can write my name upside down on it and put two crosses on the name."

Everyone stood around the rough blueprint scrutinizing it carefully. The verdict was unanimous approval.

Ma Erli was also delighted, but not to the point of complacency. When he was doing something he liked to get everything settled at one go. If he was fitting a window, he'd never forget to buy the putty; building a wall, how could he leave it on the drawing board? "Hey, don't get too engrossed in self-admiration, first put it up and then see if it's so wonderful. When can you start work?"

The director did some lengthy mental calculations and then asked the group leaders the work situation at several work sites. "We can do it like this — we'll rush things along a bit and fit you in in fifteen days' time."

一爬，那瓦片哗啦啦地掉下来，吓得他屁滚尿流!”

“哎呀，这比栽尖角玻璃管用，现在的小偷都是带手套的!”

技术员从审美的角度出发:“对，平顶围墙也难看，应该戴顶帽子，斗笠式的。”他把地皮上的草图全部踏平，拿起瓦碴来把整个的围墙重新画了一遍，加上一个小屋顶，那屋脊是弧形的。画完了把瓦碴子一扔，“小马，这座围墙如果得不到满堂彩的话，你可以把我的名字倒写在围墙上，再打上两个叉叉。”

人们围着草图左看右看，一致称赞。

马而立也是满心欢喜，但是眼下还顾不上得意。他干事喜欢一口气到底，配玻璃还忘不了买油灰泥，造围墙怎么能停留在图纸上面:“喂，不要王婆卖瓜啦，造起来再看吧，什么时候动手?”

站长盘算了半晌，又向作业组长们问了几个工区的情况:“这样吧，给你挤一挤，插在十五天之后。”

Ma Erli jumped up, and retrieving his handkerchief from the brick wiped his hands. "How will that do? I already made a guarantee at the meeting that I'll have it up within a week!"

The director gave a sigh of regret. "See, it's not surprising that people say you're not reliable. It's not as if you don't know that the Repair Centre is up to its ears in work — how could you make a guarantee like that?"

"I know the situation. I know it only too well. To tell the truth, if I wasn't fully aware of the situation I'd never have dared to make a guarantee. How about it? Can you find some way of organizing it for me? "Ma Erli took a stride forward as if he were going to force the director into the lime pit.

The director still shook his head, "There's no way. There's not enough time."

"All right. If you can't find a way, I'll arrange it. I'll give you three days' grace and you can start work on Saturday evening. Send the materials over in a truck that can take the rubble away and send a dozen labourers to clear up the foundations. On Sunday send over a good crowd of skilled bricklayers, all you old hands included, and we'll work all day and stop when we've finished the wall. You'll get overtime, an evening meal allowance, cigarettes... it's nothing — I can afford four or five packs of cigarettes!"

"Ah ha! You're certainly asking us to do a bit of overtime!"

"What about it? Haven't you ever done overtime before?

马而立跳起来了，收起砖头上的手帕擦擦手："那怎么行呢？我已经在会上作了保证，一个星期之内要修得好好的！"

站长唉了一声："喏，这就难怪人家说你办事不稳了，修建站轧扁头的情况你也不是不了解，怎么能做这样的保证呢！"

"了解，太了解了！老实说，如果了解不透的话还不敢保证呐。怎么样，你有没有办法安排？"马而立向前跨了一步，好像要把站长逼到石灰池里去。

站长还是摇头："没有办法，来不及。"

"好，你没有办法我就来安排了。先宽限你们三天，星期六的晚上动手。你们出一辆卡车把材料装过来，把碎砖运出去，派十几个小工清理好墙基。星期天多派几个好手，包括你们各位老手在内，从早干到晚，什么时候完工什么时候歇手。加班工资，夜餐费照报，这香烟嘛……没关系，我马而立三五包香烟还是请得起的！"

"啊哈，你这是叫我们加班加点！"

"怎么样，你们没有加过吗？难道还要我马

You're not expecting me to lay on a feast, are you?"

"That's... that's repaying our friendship—half official, half personal." the director was forced to admit.

"We're doing this all in the public interest. I'm just asking you to save my face," Ma Erli sighed. "I'm just a person who loves to keep up appearances, but always has a hard time. Everyone's afraid I'm unreliable but I still simply have to be impatient to get things done. I've just been moved to a new post and if the first guarantee I make turns out to be an empty boast, who's going to trust me in the future? Help me out, folks." Ma Erli had begun to plead with them. People trying to get things done often had to pay obeisance to the powers that be. It was pitiful to see.

It was one of the work team leaders who first slapped himself on the chest, "No problem, leave it to us!"

"Smooth sailing, Ma Erli!"

The trivial but complicated problem of the wall was thus decided upon. From start to finish it took something like half an hour.

By Saturday evening, the staff of the Design Institute had long since finished work and gone. An electric cable was temporarily wired up outside the gate and four 200-watt light bulbs flooded the roadway in brilliant light. People arrived, trucks arrived, bricks, tiles, lime and glazed blocks were brought in and the rubble was cleared out. In four hours all the pre-construction preparations had been completed. Then early on Sunday morning, the work began with the centre director and group leaders all lending a hand. The technician

而立办酒席!”

“那……那是交情帐,半公半私的。”站长只好承认了。

“我们是大公无私, 只求大家给我一点儿面子。”马而立叹气了,“唉,我这人是死要面子活受罪。人家都怕我办事不稳, 可我偏偏又喜欢性急。现在到了一个新的工作岗位, 如果第一次下保证就做黄牛的话, 以后还有谁敢相信我, 帮帮忙吧,各位。”马而立开始恳求了,办事人员经常要求爷爷拜奶奶,那样子也是怪可怜的。

作业组长首先拍胸脯:“没问题,我们包了!”

“祝你一帆风顺,马而立!”

十分细小而又复杂的围墙问题就这样定下来了,前后只花了大约半个钟头。

到了星期六的晚上, 设计所的人们早就下班走光了。设计所门前拉起了临时电线, 四只两百支光的灯泡把马路都照得灼亮。人来了,车来了,砖瓦、石灰、琉璃砖装过来;垃圾、碎砖运出去。足足花了四个钟头, 做好了施工前的一切准备。星期天的清早便开始砌墙,站长、组长个个动手。那技术员慎重对待, 步步不离; 在设计所的门前砌

took meticulous care to supervise every step of the way. Putting up the wall outside the Design Institute was the equivalent of working under an expert — you had to know the tricks of the trade. He scrutinized it from left and right, near and far, and even climbed up to the top of the office building to get a view of it from there. He checked from every angle to make sure the height was right and decide where the glazed blocks should be laid so that the wall harmonized with the original building and was aesthetically pleasing from any angle.

The office was empty on Sundays, so Ma Erli flew around in a whirl of activity, even requisitioning the services of Hong, the old gatekeeper, to give him a hand. He made tea, proffered cigarettes and hunted out odds and ends in the way of nails, aluminium wire and cotton thread, when necessary making flying trips to the hardware store. Here they shouted for Xiao Ma, there they shouted for Xiao Ma and true to his name, Xiao Ma * would spring like a young colt over to whoever was calling him.

The boundary wall went up at an amazing pace. People chased around shouting and calling in a bustle of activity that evoked the astonishment of passers-by.

"They must be putting up a private house!"

"No, they're having a technical examination. It's a real test of expertise to decide their grade and level."

Laying the wall was pretty easy and if they'd had new

* Xiao Ma literally means "little horse".

围墙，等于在关老爷的面前耍大刀，没有两下子是不行的。他左看右看，远看近看，爬到办公室的楼上往下看，从各个角度来最后确定围墙的高低，确定琉璃砖放在什么地位，使得这座围墙和原有的建筑物协调，不管从哪个角度看上去都很适意。

星期天机关里没人，马而立忙得飞飞，还拉住看门的洪老头做帮手。泡茶、敬烟，寻找各色小物件：元钉、铅丝、棉纱线；必要时还得飞车直奔杂货店。这里也喊小马，那里也喊小马；这小马也真是小马，谁喊便蹦到谁面前。

砌墙的速度是惊人的，人们追赶叫喊，热火朝天，惹得过路的人都很惊奇：

"这肯定是给私人造房子！"

"不，他们是在技术考试，真家伙，要定级的！"

砌墙比较方便，如果是用新砖的话，速度还

bricks it would have gone up even faster. But the glazed blocks and little roof were not so easy, particularly the roof. It was delicate work and you couldn't get everyone up there working on it either. The tiles had to be arranged carefully ridge by ridge. After every foot or so, the tiles were placed to form decorative tops and allowances also had to be made for the dripping of rain water. They'd originally planned to finish work and then eat dinner, but in the end the lights were burning until eleven at night.

Ma Erli bowed and scraped and thanked them a thousand times. He saw everyone on to the truck and then took down the electric cable, tidied up the odds and ends lying about and swept the ground. He didn't feel tired and was so pleased with himself that he couldn't resist running over to the other side of the road to admire every detail of the masterpiece.

Seen dimly through the moonlight, the boundary wall looked enchanting. It was full of poetry with its white wall, black tiles and sapphire blue windows suffused with a sparkling brilliance. The light that shone out through the patterned blocks was transformed to a shining emerald green. A light breeze blew, swaying the tree branches and making the rays of light glimmer and dance as if there was a fairytale world hidden deep within. Above the wall one could see the black roof of the building inside jutting into the night air and the wall suddenly seemed to change, melting into one with the main building, whose style it matched to perfec-

会更快点。等到砌琉璃砖和小屋顶就难了，特别是屋顶，细活儿，又不能把所有的人都拉上去。小瓦片得一垄一垄地摆，尺把长就得做瓦头，摆眉瓦，摆滴水。本来预计是完工以后吃夜餐，结果是电灯直亮到十一点。

马而立打躬作揖，千谢万谢，把人们一一送上卡车，然后再收起电线，拾掇零碎，清扫地皮，不觉得疲劳，很有点得意，忍不住跑到马路的对面把这杰作再细细地欣赏一遍。

夜色中看这堵围墙，十分奇妙，颇有点诗意。白墙、黑瓦、宝蓝色的漏窗泛出晶莹的光辉，里面的灯光从漏窗中透出来，那光线也变得绿莹莹的。轻风吹来，树枝摇曳，灯光闪烁变幻，好像有一个童话般的世界深藏在围墙的里面。抬起头来从墙顶上往里看，可以看到主建筑的黑色屋顶翘在夜空里，围墙也变得不像墙了，它带着和主建筑相似的风格进入了整体结构。附近的马

tion. The nearby road had changed too; it seemed to be the entrance to a scenic area or cultural palace. The more Ma Erli looked, the more beautiful it seemed. He felt it was the most perfectly handled job he had ever undertaken. He didn't feel like going home, so he stretched himself out on a long sofa in the upstairs meeting room. He hadn't slept properly for two days, but this time he slept very deeply and very sweetly....

The sun rose high in the sky and a ray of sunshine crept in through the eastern window and shone on Ma Erli's baby face. He was smiling peacefully, and the faintly visible dimples gave him a most attractive, naive, childish air. But he slept too deeply, for he didn't hear the exclamations of wonder and general hubbub that filled the courtyard below.

On Monday morning, people arriving at work were stupefied by the sudden appearance of the bondary wall. Although everyone had hoped the wall could be speedily rebuilt, they hadn't been in the least prepared to see it up by today, If construction had been carried out under one's very eyes—adding a foot today and six inches tomorrow, with people coming and going and the ground littered with bricks and plaster, when it was finally finished everyone would have felt a real sense of relief that the chaos was over. Then regardless of the style of the wall, it would have seemed fresh and new to look at. Today, in the blink of an eye, old mother hen had turned into a duck and it was as if it had been stolen from somewhere and brought here in the night.

路也变样了，好像是到了什么风景区或文化宫的入口。马而立越看越美，觉得这是他有生以来办得最完美的一件大事体！他也不想回家了，便在楼上会议室里的长沙发上睡了下去。他已经两天两夜没有好好地休息了，这一觉睡得很沉，很甜……

太阳升高了，一片阳光从东窗里射进来，照着马而立的娃娃脸。那脸上有恬静的微笑，浅浅的酒窝，天真的稚气，挺好看的。他睡得太沉了，院子里的惊叹、嘈杂、议论纷纭等等都没有听见。

星期一早晨，上班的人们都被突兀而起的围墙惊呆了，虽然人人都希望围墙赶快修好，如今却快得叫人毫无思想准备。如果工程是在人们的眼皮子底下进行，今天加一尺，明天高五寸，人来人往，满地乱砖泥水，最后工程结束时人们也会跟着舒口气，觉得这乱糟糟的局面总算有了了结。不管围墙的式样如何，看起来总是眼目一新，事了心平，如今是眼睛一眨，老母鸡变鸭，这围墙好像是夜间从什么地方偷来

They weren't used to it; it was too dazzling. But the vast majority of people blinked their eyes a few times and became accustomed to it. Everyone could see clearly that this wall was better than the old one, and far better than no wall at all. But there were also some people who looked it up and down and from side to side and couldn't set their minds at rest. Despite the fact that they couldn't specify anything particularly wrong with it, they still felt that it was a bit too "uhh. . . ." What "uhh" was, they hadn't really thought about and were even less capable of stating clearly. That judgement would have to await the arrival of someone with authority. Should Director Wu say "good!" most of the "uhh's" would disappear and the small number remaining, quick to grasp the situation, would praise the wall to the heavens!

Director Wu stood in the midst of the crowd looking at the wall, offering no comment from start to finish. He felt the boundary wall was what he'd imagined and yet not what he'd imagined. It was what he'd imagined because it was very unconventional, but not what he'd imagined because he hadn't envisaged *this* kind of unconventional. When he was asked to comment on the wall he just said softly, "Hmm, I never thought Ma Erli could move so fast!"

"That's just it, he's gone about this like a harumscarum, didn't even bother to consult general opinion," someone immediately chimed in. He primarily felt that his opinion hadn't been sought on the question of the wall; it was really a bit

的，不习惯，太扎眼。大多数的人把眼睛眨眨也就习惯了，谁都看得出，这围墙比原来的好，比没有更好。可也有一部分人左看右看都不踏实，虽然提不出什么褒贬，总觉得有点“那个”……“那个”是什么，他们也没有好好地想，更说不清楚，要等待权威人士来评定。如果吴所长说一声“好”，多数的“那个”也就不“那个”了，少数善于领会的“那个”还会把它说得好上天去哩！

吴所长也站在人群中看，始终不发表意见。他觉得这围墙似乎在自己的想像之中，又好像在想像之外，想像中似有似无。说有，因为他觉得这围墙也很别致；说无，因为他觉得想像之中的别致又不是这种样子。当人们征求他对围墙的意见时，他只是轻轻地说了一声：“哎，没想到马而立的手脚这么快！”

“是呀，冒失鬼办事，也不征求征求群众的意见！”有人立即附和了，首先感到这围墙之事没有征求过他的意见，实在有点“那个”……

too "uhhh"....

The three factions whose opinions had been solicited were also highly dissatisfied. Each felt that the wall had assimilated to few of their sound proposals. Their wonderful ideas had been messed up by unorthodox and wrong notions. They all stood beneath the wall explaining how it should have been done amidst much discussion and appraisal. Their ideas were concrete, penetrating and rich in humour.

"Call this a good-looking wall? Neither Chinese nor Western. Wearing a Western suit topped by a skull cap and with a green scarf wound round its neck. Which dynasty does that getup belong to? Does it have the slightest flavour of the modern age?" Zhu Zhou finished his appraisal and perused the crowd in search of support.

"That's right, a perimeter wall is after all a wall. What do you want to give it a great roof for?" The people who found the wall a bit too "uhh" began to express themselves more explicitly. All that offended their eyesight lay in that small roof. But in fact it could hardly be called a roof; it was just shaped like a roof, that was all.

Zhu Zhou was extremely complacent. He went over to the wall to measure its height and rub his hand over the protruding brick pillars. He felt the height and solidity of construction were just what he'd had in mind. It was just that the open brickwork windows and that little roof were too preposterous. It was the conservatives who were the cause of them being there! He turned his head and called to Huang

被征求过意见的三派人也很不满，觉得这围墙吸收正确的意见太少，好好的事儿都被那些歪门邪道弄糟了！他们都站在围墙的下面指指点点，纷纷评议；意见具体深刻，还富有幽默的意味：

“这围墙好看呐，中不中西不西，穿西装戴顶瓜皮帽，脖子里还缠条绿围巾呐，这身打扮是哪个朝代的？还有没有一点儿现代的气息！”朱舟讲评完了向众人巡视一眼，寻找附和的。

“是呀，围墙是座墙，要造个大屋顶干什么呢？”有点“那个”的人开始明确了，这围墙所以看起来不顺眼，都是那个小屋顶造的，忍不住要把小的说成大的，以便和五十年代曾被批判过的大屋顶挂上钩。其实这小屋顶也算不了屋顶，只是形状像个屋顶而已。

朱舟十分得意，特地跑到围墙下面，伸出手来量量高度，摸摸那凸出墙外的砖柱。觉得高度和牢度都符合他的心意，就是这漏窗和小屋顶太不像样，都是守旧派造成的！他回过头

Daquan:

"Lao Huang! You should be satisfied this time — the flavour is entirely classical!"

Huang Dapuan shook his head, "What are you talking about? He hasn't completely grasped the spirit of my conception. The roof ridge shouldn't be a flat line, it's too monotonous. He could have built two decorative squares in the centre to symbolize good luck; that would have been different without being too flowery. Why did it have to be so tall?...Lao Zhu, go and stand over there and don't move, I want to take a picture. I'll call it, 'Even with wings you couldn't fly away.'"

"You're right. It's too tall."

"There should have been corner eaves sticking up at either end."

"They didn't lay quite enough glazed blocks."

Everyone who had felt the boundary wall was a bit "uhh" helped to pick fault with it. Their ability to criticize had always been greater than their creative abilities.

He Rujin didn't make any specific comments on the wall, but approaching from a different angle brought up a question likely to have the masses rising in anger.

"Let's temporarily ignore whether this wall is good or bad. What I want to ask is does it conform with our principles of economy? How much labour did that little roof require, how much each were those glazed blocks? I'm afraid this will have used up every cent of our administrative budget. Our thrift

来喊黄达泉：

“老黄，这下子你该满意了吧，完全是古典风味！”

黄达泉摇头：“从何谈起，从何谈起，他对我的精神没有完全领会。屋脊也不应该是一条平线嘛，太单调啦，可以在当中造两个方如意，又有变化，又不华丽。为什么要造这么高呢……老朱，你站在那里不要动，拍张照片，叫插翅难飞！”

“是呀，太高啦。”

“两头还应该造尖角，翘翘的。”

“琉璃砖也安得少了点。”

所有感到有点“那个”的人都把围墙的缺点找出来了，他们的批判能力总是大于创造能力。

何如锦没有对围墙发表具体的意见，却从另外一个角度提出了一个易犯众怒的问题：

“这围墙嘛，好不好暂且不去管它。我是说这样做是否符合节约的原则？那小屋顶要花多少人工，那琉璃砖一块要多少钱！我担心这会把我们的行政经费都花光，本季度的节约奖每

bonus this quarter is likely to be twenty cents each!"

He Rujin's words evoked a wave of excitement, "That's right! He should have just built the wall and had done with it, why did he have to go and trim the top with lace!"

"This is just...." The speaker glanced around and found no sign of Ma Erli. "This is just Ma Erli's work style. The man is wasteful and extravagant. By the look of it he's a spoilt young rich boy, spending money like running a tap."

"Director Wu, was it you who made him build it like this?"

Director Wu hastily waved his hands, "No, no! I just told him to think about it. I never thought he'd act first and then ask for approval. Ma Erli...." Director Wu shouted, but Ma Erli was still sleeping on the sofa and didn't hear.

"Old Man Hong, have you seen Ma Erli arrive this morning?" Someone gave a hand to find Ma Erli. He wanted to take the chief offender to question there on the spot.

The old gatekeeper Hong was furious. "Stop your screaming and shouting! He hasn't rested for two days, unlike you!" Old Hong was disgusted by all the artful talk. He sided with Xiao Ma because he'd seen him working endlessly while the wall was being built, clothes soaked through. Not everyone could do that. Sitting at the gate he'd also heard the comments of pasers-by — they all said how attractive the wall was. He personally had an even deeper affection for the wall, for from now on he could sleep in peace. If a burglar tried to climb in, some of the tiles on the eaves would go

人只发两毛钱!"

何如锦的话引起了一点儿激动:

"可不是嘛,修座围墙就是了,还在墙顶上绣花边!"

"这就是……"说话的人向四面看了一下,没见马而立在场,"这就是马而立的作风,那人大手大脚,看样子就是个大少爷,花钱如流水!"

"吴所长,是你叫他这么修的吗?"

吴所长连忙摇手:"不不,我只是叫他考虑考虑,想不到他会先斩后奏。马而立……"吴所长叫唤了,可那马而立还睡在沙发上,没有听见。

"洪老头,你看见马而立来上班没有?"有人帮着寻找马而立了,要对这个罪魁祸首当场质疑。

看门的洪老头火气很大:"别鬼叫鬼喊的啦,人家两天两夜没有休息,像你!"洪老头对那些轻巧话很反感,他偏袒小马,因为他见到马而立在修围墙时马不停蹄,衣衫湿透,那不是每个人都能做到的。他坐在大门口也听到许多路人的议论,都说这围墙很美。他自己对围墙还有更深一层的喜爱,从今以后可以安心睡觉,如果有小偷爬墙的话,那檐瓦会哗啦啦地

crashing to the ground!

Director Wu frowned. He waved his hands for silence and told everyone to go and get on with their work, at the same time calling Lao Zhu, Lao Huang, Lao He and others to attend a brief meeting upstairs.

Zhu Zhou pushed open the door of the meeting room and discovered Ma Erli sleeping peacefully on the sofa!

"Heavens! We've been looking for you everywhere and couldn't find you, and the whole time you were here having a good sleep. Get up!"

Ma Erli rubbed his eyes and scrambled up. Still half asleep, he hazily weathered the hail of criticism.

But it wasn't so bad. Although there was a lot of criticism, no one suggested demolishing the wall and rebuilding it. The boundary wall passed the summer and autumn unscathed. Delicate grasses began to grow around the foot and wisteria began to climb across its sides.

That winter, the Architectural Design Institute played host to the annual architectural conference to which several scholars and specialists from different parts of the country were invited. Because there weren't a lot of participants, the conference was held in the ground floor meeting room of the Design Institute. No sooner had the experts entered the gate than their attention was attracted by the boundary wall. They looked it up and down, full of praise. Once the conference had got under way, the wall became the topic of conversation. They said the boundary wall solved one of the

掉下几片！

吴所长皱着眉头，挥挥手，叫大家各自办公去，同时招呼老朱、老黄、老何等等上楼去开碰头会。

朱舟把会议室的门一推，却发现马而立好端端地睡在沙发里！

"唉呀，到处找你找不着，原来在这里呼呼大睡，起来！"

马而立揉着眼睛爬起来了，睡意未消，朦朦胧胧地挨了一顿批……

还好，批评的意见虽然很多，却没有人提出要拆掉重修。围墙安然无恙，稳度夏秋。小草在墙脚下长起来了，藤萝又开始爬上墙去。

这年冬天，设计所作东道主，召开建筑学年会，邀请了几位外地的学者、专家出席。因为人数不多，会场便在设计所楼下的会议室里。几位专家一进门便被这堵围墙吸引住了，左看右看，赞不绝口。会议开始后便以围墙作话题，

major problems of city construction! Today's city architecture was too monotonous. Everything was constructed on a standard matchbox design, unchanging and unornamented, totally lacking our own unique traditional flavour. There were also places which blindly went back to the ways of the ancients, building curving eaves with upswept corners, carved rafters and painted crossbeams with the result that hotels turned out like temple halls. The good thing about this wall was its traditional style. Yet it was not a blind restoration of the classic but done with practical economy. It also harmonized with the building itself. They hoped that comrades would carefully think things over and come to a scholarly conclusion.

Particpants from the Design Institute were all pleasantly surprised. They had never imagined a golden phoenix would appear out of their hen's nest!

Director Wu pondered, "This is all because the guiding thought was clear and unequivocal. From the start I made explicit demands, at the same time rousing the masses to comprehensive discussion. . . ."

Zhu Zhou was also pondering, "Too true, the practical value of the boundary wall can't be overlooked. Right from the start I maintained that it must be taller, more secure. . . ."

Huang Daquan was quite simply delighted with himself. "If it hadn't been for me arguing for what I knew was right, who knows what unearthly shape the wall would have gone

说这围墙回答了城市建筑中的一个重大问题！目前的城市建筑太单调，都是火柴盒式的标准设计，没有变化，没有装饰，没有我们民族的特有风格；但是也有些地方盲目复古，飞檐翘角，雕梁画栋，把宾馆修得像庙堂似的。这围墙好就好在既有民族风格，又不盲目复古，经济实用，又和原有建筑物的风格统一。希望建筑设计所的同志们好好地考虑一下，作一个学术性的总结。

设计所的到会者都喜出望外，想不到金凤凰又出在鸡窝里！

吴所长考虑了："这主要是指导思想明确，一开始便提出了明确的要求，同时发动群众进行充分的讨论……"

朱舟也考虑了："是嘛，围墙的实用价值是不可忽视的。我一开始便主张造得高一些，牢一点……"

黄达泉简直有些得意了："如果不是我据理力争的话，这围墙还不知道会造成什么鬼样

up in. Architects just can't afford to forget their origins. Our ancestors understood the magical effects of boundary walls long ago. They had scores of names for them, let alone. . . ." Huang Daquan considered this speech should be written into the opening paragraph of the summary; it would do as a foreword.

He Rujin had suffered momentary unhappiness, but then immediately felt his contribution had really been enormous. If he hadn't insisted on economy, Ma Erli would never have gone looking for old bricks and tiles and would never have found the glazed blocks. Without the glazed blocks the wall would have been nothing out of the ordinary.

Ma Erli didn't take part in the conference; he just busied himself rushing in and out of the room arranging tables and chairs and bringing tea and water. He'd taken into consideration the fact that the room would be very cold and from somewhere or other had produced four glowing charcoal braziers. With one placed in each corner, the room immediately became as warm as springtime. Everyone felt cosy and relaxed. . . .

Translated by Rosie A. Roberts

哩！搞建筑的人决不能数典忘祖，我们的祖先很早就懂得围墙的妙用，光那名称就有几十种……”黄达泉考虑，这一段话应该写在总结的开头，作为序言。

何如锦曾经有过一刹那时间的不愉快，马上就觉得自己也有很大的贡献，如果不是他坚持节约的话，马而立就不会去找旧砖瓦，不找旧砖瓦就找不到玻璃砖，没有玻璃砖这围墙就会毫无生气，简直不像个东西！

马而立没有参加会议，只是在会场中进进出出，忙得飞飞，忙着端正桌椅，送茶送水。他考虑到这会场里很冷，不知道又从什么地方弄来四只熊熊的炭火盆，放在四个角落里，使得房间里顿时温暖如春，人人舒展……

The Gourmet

A Word About Eating

The word gourmet is pleasing to the ear, even more so to the eye. If you explain it in simple everyday language, however, it's not so appealing: A gourmet is a person who is totally devoted to eating.

That a person who devotes himself solely to eating should be given a special name such as gourmet was something I'd never expected. But then the things you expect never happen and the unexpected often takes place right in front of your nose. It so happened a certain person who liked eating more than anything else haunted me like a spectre for forty years. I despised and loathed him. I opposed him too but in the end I turned out to have no special skills of any kind while he became known as a gourmet for his refined tastes.

I should first and foremost make it clear that I am not on the whole opposed to eating; if I had been then I would have died soon after I was born. No, that's not what I mean. Hard work and frugality are a national tradition while gluttony has always been criticized. As a child, my mother taught me that greediness was bad and would scold me by

美食家[1]

一　吃喝小引

美食家这个名称很好听，读起来还真有点美味！如果用通俗的语言来加以解释的话，不妙了：一个十分好吃的人。

好吃还能成家！这是我万万没有想到的。想到的事情往往不来，没有想到的事情却常常就在身边；硬是有那么一个因好吃而成家的人，像怪影似的在我的身边晃荡了四十年。我藐视他，憎恨他，反对他，弄到后来我一无所长，他却因好吃成精而被封为美食家！

首先得声明，我决不一般地反对吃喝；如果我自幼便反对吃喝的话，那末，当我呱呱坠地之时，也就是一命呜呼之日了，反不得的。可是我们的民族传统是讲究勤劳朴实，生活节俭，好吃历来就遭到反对。母亲对孩子从小便进行“反好吃”的教育，虽然那教育总是以责骂

①英译文有删节。

saying, "You greedy guts, you're a little good-for-nothing." And children would tease one another by poking fingers in your cheek and saying, "Shame on you, greedy, shame." Bashful girls would never dare eat fritters or buns on the street. Growing up in this kind of environment, I always looked down on people who were too fond of good food, even more so after meeting Zhu Ziye, who'd been a glutton since childhood. After that, people who indulged themselves in eating made my stomach turn even more.

Zhu was a capitalist, a property owner who owned almost all the houses in my lane. He didn't need much skill to exploit anyone; all he had to do was say three words, "Collect the rent". He didn't need to say it in fact, since his agent would do it for him. He didn't even know how many houses he had and where they were. His father was a shrewd property dealer who'd opened an agency in Shanghai and bought a lot of houses in Suzhou. A bomb had fallen on his Shanghai home at the start of the War of Resistance against Japan and there had only been one survivor in the whole family — Zhu, who'd been at a wedding banquet at his grandmother's in Suzhou. His liking for food had saved his life; without it he'd have died.

He was almost thirty when I met him. Don't think that all gluttons are fat; that's not so, he was as thin as a willow twig. Perhaps his thinness and a feeling that he'd never quite had enough was the reason for his gluttony. A truly tubby type wouldn't dare to eat so much. Gluttons take care of

的形式出现："好吃鬼，没有出息！"好吃成鬼，而且是没有出息的。孩子羞孩子的时候，总是用手指刮着自己的脸皮："不要脸，馋痨坯；馋痨坯，不要脸！"因此怕羞的姑娘从来不敢在马路上啃大饼油条；戏台上的小姐饮酒时总是用水袖遮起来的。我从小便接受了此种"反好吃"的教育，因此对饕餮之徒总有点瞧不起。特别是碰上那个自幼好吃，如今成"家"的朱自冶以后，见到了好吃的人便像醋滴在鼻子里。

朱自冶是个资本家，地地道道的资本家，决不是错划的。有人说资本家比地主强，他们有文化，懂技术，懂得经营管理。这话我也同意。可这朱自冶却是个例外，他是房屋资本家，我们这条巷子里的房屋差不多全是他的。他剥削别人没有任何技术，只消说三个字："收房钱！"甚至连这三个字也用不着说，因为那收房钱的事儿自有经纪人代理。房屋资本家大概总懂得营造术吧，这门技术对社会也是很有用的。朱自冶对此却是一窍不通，他连自家究竟有多少房屋，坐落在哪里，都是稀里糊涂的。他的父亲曾经是一个很精明的房地产商人，抗日战争之前在上海开房地产交易所，家住在上海，却在苏州买下了偌大的家私。抗日战争之初，一个炸弹落在他家的屋顶上，全家有一幸免，那就是朱自冶——到苏州的外婆家来吃喜酒的。朱自冶因好吃而幸存一命，所以不好吃便难以生存。

我认识朱自冶的时候，他已经快到三十岁。别以为好吃的人都是胖子，不对，朱自冶那时瘦得像根柳条枝儿似的。也许是他觉得自己

英汉对照
English-Chinese
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their mouths, not their appearance. Though Zhu had enough money to look after both his mouth and his looks, he had no interest in clothes at all. All year round he'd wear long gowns bought in second-hand stores. He put them on as soon as he bought them and left the dirty ones in public bath-houses. People said he was married, but he had neither children nor a woman. He'd been seen once riding in a pedicab with a pretty woman at Huqiu Hill, but people later learned that she'd been unable to get a cab, had shared one with him and he'd boorishly made her pay half the fare.

His home in Shanghai bombed, he lived by himself in Suzhou in a Western-style house. It had been built in the twenties and had screen doors and windows, carpeted floors and a proper bathroom. On one balcony were two large tanks for storing water pumped up from a well. This two-storeyed building sat behind a big courtyard, in front of which was a row of six rooms used as a gatehouse, kitchen, storage room, pantry and servants' quarters.

My maternal aunt and Zhu's paternal aunt were cousins, so when my father died a few years after the war broke out, my mother and I moved into one of the six rooms. We lived rent free but had two duties: one was to be Zhu's gatekeeper and the other was to help with the housework. They were both pretty light tasks since Zhu went out early every morning and came back late every night. He had a house but not much housework and never asked my mother to do anything. He found it a nuisance when she offered to wash his

太瘦，所以才时时刻刻感到没有吃够，真正胖得不能动弹的人，倒是不敢多吃的。好吃的人总是顾嘴不顾身，这话却有点道理。尽管朱自冶有足够的钱来顾嘴又顾身，可他对穿着一事毫无兴趣。整年穿着半新不旧的长袍大褂，都是从估衣店里买来的；买来以后便穿上身，脱下来的脏衣服却"忘记"在澡堂里。听说他也曾结过婚，但是他的身边没有孩子，也没有女人。只有一次，看见他和一个妖冶的女人合坐一辆三轮车在虎丘道上兜风，后来才知道，那女人是雇不到车，请求顺带的，朱自冶也毫不客气地叫那女人付掉一半车钱。

朱自冶在上海的家没有了，独自住在苏州的一座房子里。这房子是二十年代末期的建筑，西式的。有纱门、纱窗和地毯，还有全套的卫生设备。晒台上有两个大水箱，水是用电泵从井里抽上来的。这座两层楼的小洋房坐落在一个大天井的后面，前面是一排六间的平房；门堂、厨房、马达间、贮藏室以及佣人的住所都在这里。

因为我的姨妈和朱自冶的姑妈是表姐妹，所以在抗战后期，在我的父亲谢世之后，便搬进朱自冶的住宅，住在前面的平房里。不出房钱，尽两个义务：一是兼作朱自冶的守门人，二是要我的妈妈帮助朱自冶料理点家务。这两个义务都很轻松，朱自冶早出晚归，有家没务，从来也不要求我妈妈帮他干什么。倒是我的妈妈实在看不过去，要帮他拆洗被褥，扫扫灰尘，打开窗户。他不仅不欢迎，反而觉得不胜其烦，多

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sheets or dust and air the rooms for him. He thought this entirely unnecessary. To him a home was merely a bed after overindulgence, and the minute his head touched the pillow he'd start snoring.

Zhu got up very early and never overslept because his stomach worked like an alarm clock. As soon as he opened his eyes, the first thing that occurred to him was to go to Zhou Hongxing's to eat the first batch of noodles.

Zhu Hongxing's was well-known for its noodles. If, for instance, you sat at a table and called out, "Hey (you didn't say comrade then), give me a bowl of such-and-such noodles." The waiter would pause a minute and then sing, "One bowl of noodles coming up." The reason he waited was to see what other specifications people had for the noodles — how they were to be cooked, how much broth, how much leek, oil, or vegetables and pork were to go on top or whether or not you wanted to "cross the bridge", meaning the vegetables and pork were served as a side dish instead of in the same bowl as the noodles. This you ate by adding it to the noodles yourself. If it was Zhu at the table, the waiter would warble, "Yes sir, one bowl of lightly cooked shrimp noodles, a lot of broth and leeks, a large portion of vegetables and pork and cross the bridge."

This concoction, complicated enough in itself, was less important to Zhu than that the noodles were from the first batch. All the noodles were boiled in the same pot and since the water gradually thickened up the later noodles were

此一举。因为家在他的概念中仅仅是一张床铺，当他上铺的时候已经酒足饭饱，靠上枕头便打呼噜。

朱自冶起得很早，睡懒觉倒是与他无缘，因为他的肠胃到时便会蠕动，准确得和闹钟差不多。眼睛一睁，他的头脑里便跳出一个念头："快到朱鸿兴去吃头汤面！"这句话需要作一点讲解，否则的话只有苏州人，或者是只有苏州的中老年人才懂，其余的人很难理解其中的诱惑力。

那时候，苏州有一家出名的面店叫作朱鸿兴，如今还开设在怡园的对面。至于朱鸿兴都有哪许多花式面点，如何美味等等我都不交待了，食谱里都有，算不了稀奇，只想把其中的吃法交待几笔。吃还有什么吃法吗？有的。同样的一碗面，各自都有不同的吃法，美食家对此是颇有研究的。比如说你向朱鸿兴的店堂里一坐："喂！(那时不叫同志)来一碗××面。"跑堂的稍许一顿，跟着便大声叫喊："来哉，××面一碗。"那跑堂的为什么要稍许一顿呢，他是在等待你吩咐吃法的——硬面，烂面，宽汤，紧汤，拌面；重青（多放蒜叶），免青（不要放蒜叶），重油（多放点油），清淡点（少放油），重面轻交（面多些，交头少点），重交轻面（交头多，面少点），过桥——交头不能盖在面碗上，要放在另外的一只盘子里，吃的时候用筷子搛过来，好像是通过一顶石拱桥才跑到你嘴里……如果是朱自冶向朱鸿兴的店堂里一坐，你就会听见那跑堂的喊出一大片："来哉，清炒虾仁一碗，要宽汤、重青，重交要过桥，硬点！"

never as good as the first. If he got those, Zhu would be unhappy all day, feeling all the time that something was wrong. Consequently, unike Oblomov he couldn't sleep in but had to get up before daybreak, quickly wash his face and then get there in time for the very first batch. As with other art forms, the art of eating depended on how well one was in command of time and place.

As Zhu emerged rubbing his eyes, his rickshaw puller, A'er, would be waiting for him at the gate. Zhu would climb in ostentatiously, ring the bell with his foot and go off to Zhu Hongxing's. After that, he'd go on to a teahouse in Changmenshi Road.

There were teahouses everywhere in Suzhou and Zhu patronized this particular one because of its high standards. It was a large establishment with a few private rooms furnished with rosewood tables and rattan chairs. They made their tea with leaves straight from the Dongting Hills and rainwater boiled in an earthenware pot over a pine branch fire. Eating and drinking are an integral whole, and all gourmets like good tea.

After Zhu had settled himself down in the teahouse, his dining companions would drift in. Gourmets only ever eat alone at breakfast. Otherwise, they must have between four and eight people, since Suzhou cuisine comprises a whole set of dishes: cold ones first, hot stir-fried ones next, then sweet dishes, then further specialties, then pastries and dumplings and finally a big bowl of soup. One person cannot

一碗面的吃法已经叫人眼花缭乱了，朱自冶却认为这些还不是主要的；最重要的是要吃“头汤面”。千碗面，一锅汤。如果下到一千碗的话，那面汤就糊了，下出来的面就不那么清爽、滑溜，而且有一股面汤气。朱自冶如果吃下一碗有面汤气的面，他会整天精神不振，总觉得有点什么事儿不如意。所以他不能像奥勃洛摩夫那样躺着不起床，必须擦黑起来，匆匆盥洗，赶上朱鸿兴的头汤面。吃的艺术和其它的艺术相同，必须牢牢地把握住时空关系。

朱自冶揉着眼睛出大门的时候，那个拉包月的阿二已经把黄包车拖到了门口。朱自冶大模大样地向车上一坐，头这么一歪，脚这么一踩，叮当一阵铃响，到朱鸿兴去吃头汤面。吃罢以后再坐上阿二的黄包车，到阊门石路去蹲茶楼。

苏州的茶馆到处有，那朱自冶为什么独独要到阊门石路去呢？有考究。那爿大茶楼上有几个和一般茶客隔开的房间，摆着红木桌、大藤椅，自成一个小天地。那里的水是天落水，茶叶是直接从洞庭东山买来的；煮水用瓦罐，燃料用松枝，茶要泡在宜兴出产的紫砂壶里。吃喝吃喝，吃与喝是一个不可分割的整体，凡是称得上美食家的人，无一不是陆羽和杜康的徒弟的。

朱自冶登上茶楼之后，他的吃友们便陆续到齐。美食家们除掉早点之外，决不能单独行动，最少不能少于四个，最多不得超过八人，因为苏州菜有它一套完整的结构。比如说开始的时候是冷盆，接下来是热炒，热炒之后是甜食，

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manage the whole array and one dish does not provide an adequate sense of Suzhou cuisine. Therefore gourmets must move in groups. Zhu and his friends would first meet at a teahouse to reflect on the delicious food they'd consumed the previous day. The conversation would then turn to the venue of the next meal. If they were fed up with the restaurants nearby, they would go to a distant one by rickshaw or carriage.... Unfortunately I cannot describe in detail all the delicacies of Suzou and its environs. I'm afraid that it would make even more people hold their conferences here. It's hard to gauge the side effects of a story.

What Concerned Me

I wouldn't have loathed Zhu quite so much if he'd had nothing to do with me. He could have been a gourmet, I could have been a poor student, and we could have coexisted in peace. But so far I've described only his breakfast and lunch; he hasn't had his supper yet.

When Zhu had finished lunch, he would go to the bathhouse. This wasn't so much to take a bath as to find a comfortable place to digest his rich meal. As they say, you get listless if you're hungry and lazy when full. His stomach full, Zhu would dazedly make his way to his rickkshaw, basking in contentment, in a comfortable, languorous fairyland. He would sway back and forth in A'er's rickshaw,

甜食的后面是大菜，大菜的后面是点心，最后以一盆大汤作总结。这台完整的戏剧一个人不能看，只看一幕又不能领略其中的含义。所以美食家们必须集体行动。先坐在茶楼上回味昨天的美食，评论得失。第一阶段是个漫淡会。会议一结束便要转入正题，为了慎重起见，还不得不抽出一段时间来讨论今日向何方？是到新聚丰、义昌福，还是到松鹤楼。如果这些地方都吃腻了，他们也结伴远行，每人雇上一辆黄包车，或者是四人合乘一辆马车，浩浩荡荡，马蹄声碎，到木渎的石家饭店去吃鲃肺汤，枫桥镇上吃大面，或者是到常熟去吃叫花子鸡……可惜我不能把苏州和它近郊的美食写得太详细，深怕会因此而为苏州招来更多的会议，小说的副作用往往难以料及。

二　与我有涉

如果朱自冶仅仅自我吃喝而与我无关的话，我也不会那么强烈地厌恶他。他当他的美食家，我当我的穷学生，本来是能够平安相处的。可是我在前面的一节中只说到朱自冶吃早点，吃中饭，他还有一顿晚饭没有吃呐！

朱自冶吃罢中饭以后，便进澡堂去了。他进澡堂并不完全是为了洗澡，主要是找一个舒适的地方去消化那一顿丰盛的筵席。俗话说饿了打瞌睆，吃饱跑勿动。朱自冶饱食一顿之后双脚沉重，头脑昏迷，沉浸在一种满足，舒畅而又懒洋洋的神仙境界里。他摇摇晃晃地坐上阿

speeding to the bathhouse as if making an emergency visit to the hospital.

All he had to do at the bathhouse was reach out and lift the door curtain and the counter attendant would shout, "Manager Zhu is here." God knows how he'd become "manager", since property owners were usually addressed as "master". But that respectful title was no longer fashionble, had no exotic flavour. What's more, there were big masters and little ones. Small shop owners could be called master too. But managers were different; they worked in foreign enterprises or big companies, did big business and were never stingy with tips. As soon as his arrival was announced, two attendants would rush over. One on either side, they'd conduct him to a first-class room, similar to the ones you get in hotels today. It had two beds, an enamel bathtub, a wash basin and a shower. The only difference was that it was smaller and had no air-conditioning. In winter it was heated by steam from the bathhouse and in summer cooled by a fan which rotated incessantly overhead.

Like an invalid, Zhu let everything be done for him. Tea was served, his bath water run, even his shoes were removed for him. He didn't want to do anything but concentrate on his stomach. Eating was a pleasure and digestion had its appeal too; you had to experience the thing fully and mustn't be distracted by externals. The best method of concentration was to soak in warm water and think about nothing, just experience the slow movements of the stomach, thereby

二的黄包车，一阵风似的拉到澡堂里，好像是到医院里挂急诊似的。

朱自冶进澡堂只有举手之劳，即伸出手来撩开门帘。门帘一掀，那坐账台的便高声大喊："朱经理来哉！"天晓得，朱自冶哪一天当过经理的，对资本家应该喊一声老板才对。不过，老板这种尊称那时已经不时髦了。一是缺少点洋味，二是老板有大有小，开爿夫妻老婆店也能叫作老板的。经理就不同了，洋行经理，公司经理，买卖大，手面阔，给起小账来决不是三块两块的，五十元的关金券用不着找零头！所以那跑堂的一听到朱经理来哉，立刻有两个人应声而出，一边一个，几乎是把个朱自冶抬到头等房间里。这头等房间也和现在的高级招待所有点相似，两张铺位，一个搪瓷澡盆，有洗脸池，有莲蓬头。只是整个的面积较小，也没有空调设备。不碍，冬天有蒸气，夏天有一只华生老牌的大吊扇，四块木板在头顶上旋个不歇。

朱自冶向房间里一坐，就像重病号到了病房里，一切都用不着自己动手。跑堂的来献茶，擦背的来放水，甚至连脱鞋也用不着自己费力。朱自冶也不愿费力，痴痴呆呆地集中力量来对付那只胃，他觉得吃是一种享受，可那消化也是一种妙不可言的美，必须潜心地体会，不能被外界的事物来分散注意力。集中精力最好的方法是泡在温水里，这时候四大皆空，万念俱寂，只觉得那胃在轻轻地蠕动，周身有一

producing an indescribable sense of well-being. This had as much beauty as tasting exquisite food, although one could not replace the other. Inert, his eyes half-closed, he soaked drowsily for half an hour until the masseur arrived with a large board. He drew Zhu out of the tub, placed the board on top and made Zhu lie on it face downwards. Massage is a passive exercise. Strolling after lunch is also healthy but those who do it must move their legs. All anyone being massaged has to do is relax and allow their limbs to be rubbed, their body turned over, and then be helped to sit up and lie down again. The same results are arrived at without using a single ounce of energy. A true gourmet must know how to digest his food, otherwise his stomach might threaten to stop working and this would be very dangerous.

This period of exercise wasn't that long, usually not more than half an hour. Afterwards he moved over to a couch to have his limbs kneaded and pounded. This was the final stage and possibly had a soporific effect, for he soon dozed off to the light, rhythmic pounding. During his minimum three hours' sleep his stomach would evacuate its food, making room for the next meal.

I finished school before he woke up. As soon as I put down my satchel, my mother would say, "It's still Yuan Dachang Inn today; go quickly."

This made sense only to me, since I knew that Zhu still had one more meal to devour.

Zhu's supper was something special too. Just as in litera-

种说不出的舒坦和甜美，这和品尝美食有异曲同工之妙，但是二者不能相互代替。他就这么四肢不动，两眼半闭地先在澡盆里泡上半个钟头。泡得迷迷糊糊、昏昏欲睡的时候，那擦背的背着一块大木板进来了。他把朱自冶从澡盆里拉出来，把木板向澡盆上一盖，叫朱自冶躺上"手术台"，开始了他那擦背的作业。读者诸君切不可把擦背二字作狭义的理解，好像擦背就是替人擦洗身上的污垢。不对，朱自冶天天一把澡，有什么可擦的？这擦背对他来说实在是一种古老的按摩术，是被动式的运动。饭后百步走被认为是长寿之道，但是奉行此道者需要自己迈开双腿。擦背则不同，只消四肢松弛地躺在"手术台"上，任人上摩下擦，伸拳屈腿，左转右侧，放倒扶起，同样收到运动的功效，却用不着自己花力气。真正的美食家必须精通消化术，如果来个食而不化，那非但不能连续工作，而且也十分危险！

朱自冶的此种运动时间也不太长，大体上不超过半个钟头。然后便在卧榻上躺下，开始那一整套的繁文缛节，什么捏脚、拿筋、敲膀、捶腿。这捶腿是最后的一个节目，很可能和催眠术有点关系，朱自冶在轻轻的拍打中，在那清脆而有节奏的响声中心旷神怡，渐渐入睡。这一觉起码三个钟头，让那胃中的食物消化干净，为下一顿腾出地位。

当朱自冶快要醒来时，我也从学校里下学归来。书包一放，妈妈便来关照：

"今天还在元大昌，快去！"

妈妈的话只有我懂，那朱自冶还有一顿晚

ture volume two must never be too similar to volume one, so he went not to a noodle place or a restaurant but to a tavern. At lunch time Zhu and his friends savoured each dish and didn't take strong alcohol for fear that it might numb their palates, making them incapable of differentiating subtleties. At supper time they could drink to their hearts' content and then have a good sleep afterwards with no fear of insomnia. So they had to go to an inn or a tavern.

Suzhou taverns served alcohol but no food apart from snacks such as dried beancurd, peanuts, fried broad beans and peppery cabbage. That was all right enough for gentlemen but not for gourmets, who were richer than gentlemen. They must have food to go with the superior wine, and a wide variety too. So they turned to another field — appetizers.

One didn't get such things in just one part of Suzhou; they were scattered all over the place in little streets, at bridgeheads and crossroads. Some were sold in shops, some in stalls, some by small vendors. No one waiter could get them all; you had to send an errand boy out to buy them. Perhaps because of my long legs, Zhu one day asked my mother, "Your Gao Xiaoting is a clever lad; could he help me out? I'll treat him well."

My mother had no particular objection. She'd been feeling bad at living rent free with no housework to do and wanted to do something for the sake of her conscience. But I didn't like the idea of being his errand boy. How could a dignified

饭没有吃呐!

朱自冶吃晚饭也是别具一格,也和写小说一样,下一篇决不能雷同于上一篇。所以他既不上面馆,也不上菜馆,而是上酒店。中午的一顿饭他们是以品味为主,用他们的术语来讲叫"吃点味道"。所以在吃的时候最多只喝几杯花雕,白酒点滴不沾,他们认为喝了白酒之后嘴辣舌麻,味觉迟钝,就品不出那滋味之中千分之几的差别!晚上可得开怀畅饮了,一醉之后可以呼呼大睡,免得饱尝那失眠的苦味,因此必须上酒店。

苏州的酒店卖酒不卖菜,最多备有几碟豆腐干,兰花豆,辣白菜之类。孔乙己能有这些便行了,君子在酒不在菜嘛。美食家则不然,因为他们比君子有钱,酒要考究,菜也是马虎不得的。既不能马虎,又不能雷同,于是他们便转向苏州食品中的另一个体系——小吃。提到苏州的小吃我又不愿多写了,除掉如前所述的原因外,还因为它会勾起我一段痛苦的回忆,我被一个我所厌恶的人随意差遣!

苏州的小吃不是由哪一爿店经营的,它散布在大街小巷,桥堍路口。有的是店,有的是摊,有的是肩挑手提沿街叫卖的。如果要以各种风味小吃来下酒的话,那就没有一个跑堂的能对付得了,必须有个跑街的到四下里去收集。也许是我的腿长吧,朱自冶便来和我妈商议:

"你家高小庭蛮机灵,阿好相帮我做点事体,我也勿会亏待伊。"

妈妈当然答应罗,她住了人家的房子不给

secondary school student be the attendant of a glutton!

My mother cried. We'd been poor since my father died, reliant on my sailor brother to make ends meet. "Go, Xiaoting, we're living here free of charge, we don't even pay for electricity and water; that alone would come to what we spend on food. A single word from Manager Zhu and you could be out of school and both of us out on the street. Your father left us too soon; I beg you...."

So I had to put up with it. Every evening I would wait at the tavern door with a bamboo basket. When the neon signs went on, Zhu and his friends, clean and fragrant, with ruddy cheeks and in good spirits, would arrive in a line of gleaming rickshaws, bells ringing and horns bleating, weaving their way through the pedestrians like a dragon. Zhu was always at the front, and A'er, spectacularly strong and vigorous, would remove the blanket covering Zhu's knees so that he could nimbly alight. Outside the tavern, they were greeted not by the proprietor or the waiters but by two rows of ragged, filthy beggars with their bony trembling hands outstrectched. Zhu was prepared, and with a wave of his hand a small bill would fly to the beggars' leader. "Off with you," he'd say.

The beggars dispersed and I, a beggar of a different kind, would walk up to Zhu with a hungry stomach, basket in hand. This beggar was different because he knew a little about geography, about history, about freedom and equality, and because he opposed gluttony and believed in human

钱，又没有什么家务可料理，心里老是过意不去，巴不得能为朱自冶做点事，以免良心受责备。可怜的妈妈不知道剥削二字，只承认一切现存的社会法规。她教育儿子不能好吃，却对朱自冶的好吃不加反对，她认为那是一种“吃福”，好吃与吃福是两回事体。可我却把它当作一回事，怎么也不愿意去替朱自冶当跑街的。堂堂的一个高中生怎么能去给一个好吃鬼当小厮呢！

妈妈又哭了，父亲谢世后家境贫困，是靠我的大哥当远洋水手挣点钱：“去吧小庭，我们头顶人家的天，脚踏人家的地，住了人家的房子不出房租，又不交水电费，算起来相当于全家的伙食费。只要朱经理说个不字，你就念不成书，我们一家就会住在露天里。只怪你爸爸走得早啊，我求求你……”

我只好忍辱负重了，每天提着个竹篮去等候在酒店的门口。等到华灯初上，霓虹灯亮满街头的时候，朱自冶和他的吃友们坐着黄包车来了。一长串油光锃亮的黄包车，当当地响着铜铃，哇哇地揿着喇叭，像游龙似的从人群中夺路而来，在酒店门口徐徐地停下。他们一个个洗得干干净净，浑身散发着香皂味，满面红光，春风得意。朱自冶的黄包车总是走在前面，车夫阿二也显得特别健壮而神气。阿二替朱自冶掀掉膝盖上的毡毯，朱自冶一跃落地，轻松矫捷。在酒店门口迎接他们的不是老板，也不是跑堂的，而是两排衣衫褴褛，满脸污垢，由叫花子组成的仪仗队。乞丐们双手向前平举，嘴中喊着老爷，枯树枝似的手臂在他的左右颤

dignity. When the beggears had scattered, leaving me at the fore, I was so ashamed and furious that I felt like throwing my basket as Zhu. But I swallowed the humiliation, took the money from his hand and, following his instructions, would go off to get roast pork from Lu's shop, game from Ma's restaurant, fish from a delicatessen, goose from an old man's house, fried beancurd from Xuanmiao Temple, and other Suzhou delicacies from famous stalls and stores.

That basket over my arm, I'd make my way through the small lanes and broad streets. There were tall buildings bursting with music, and cobbled streets brightly coloured beneath neon lights. There were dimly-lit lanes as silent as cemeteries where old women scavenged in dustbins. There were lavish feasts and there were shadowy figures queuing outside grain stores, numbers chalked on their backs, waiting for the following morning's rice ration. A family holding a wedding reception would take up all the tables in the Pine and Crane Restaurant, filling Guanqian Street with carriages, pedicabs and rickshaws. The bride would wear a long gown and a veil while the guests would be in Western-style suits and leather shoes. But in the corridors of the Xuanmiao Temple people who might not see tomorrow huddled together beneath ragged sacks.

Behind the scarlet gates meat and wine rot
On the road lie men frozen to death.

抖。朱自冶似乎早有准备,手一扬,一张小票面的钞票飞向叫花子头:"去去。"

叫花子呼啦一声散开，我这个手提竹篮，依门而立,饥肠辘辘的特殊叫花子便到了朱自冶的面前。这个叫花子所以特殊,是因为他知道一点地理历史,自由平等,还读过三民主义;他反对好吃,还懂得人的尊严。当叫花子呼啦一声散开而把我烘托出来的时候，我满腔怒火，汗颜满面，恨不得要把手中的竹篮向朱自冶砸过去!可是我得忍气吞声地从朱自冶的手中接过钞票，按照他的吩咐到陆稿荐去买酱肉，到马咏斋去买野味，到采芝斋去买虾子鲞鱼，到某某老头家去买糟鹅，到玄妙观里去买油氽臭豆腐干,到那些鬼才知道的地方去把鬼才知道的风味小吃寻觅……

我提着竹篮穿街走巷,苏州的夜景在我的面前交替明灭。这一边是高楼美酒,二簧西皮,那霓虹灯把铺路的石子照得五彩斑斓;那一边是街灯昏暗，巷子里像死一般的沉寂，老妇人在垃圾箱旁边捡菜皮。这里是杯盘交错,名菜陆陈，猜拳行令；那里却有许多人像影子似的排在米店门口，背上用粉笔编着号码，在等待明天早晨供应配给米。这里是某府喜事,包下了整个的松鹤楼,马车、三轮车、黄包车在观前街上排了一长溜。新娘子轻纱披肩,长裙曳地,出入者西装革履，珠光宝气；可那玄妙观的廊沿下却有一大堆人蜷缩在麻袋片里,内中有的人也许就看不到明天……"朱门酒肉臭，路有冻死骨。"这句众所周知的诗句常在我的头脑里徘徊。

These famous lines kept coming back to me.

Zhu was generous with me, often shoving change into my pocket, with the words "Keep it," as if to a beggar.

I would stand woodenly, humiliated to the core.

"Take it and buy some meat for your grandmother."

Insult was overcome by hardship. I had been brought up by my grandmother, who was already in her late seventies, toothless, absent-minded and partially paralyed. But she had a good appetite and wanted to have meat every day, particularly roast pork cooked with fermented beancurd from Lu's shop, so well cooked that it melted in your mouth. She had no idea about prices and inflation; to her everything was still in copper coins and silver dollars. She suspected that my mother begrudged the money my brother sent home to get her pork. She accused her of mistreating her and often nagged her bitterly and at length. My mother's explanations fell on deaf ears and she wept silently, her tears falling into the ration rice as she picked the sand and gravel out of it. Those tears broke my heart.

The meat I bought with Zhu's change moved my grandmother greatly and she would stroke my hair with a quivering hand and say, "You're a good filial boy, I didn't bring you up for nothing...."

When she talked like that I would almost break down and start sobbing, but instead I held back and squatted beside her bed. Why not let her derive some consolation from my insult money?

朱自冶倒是不肯亏待我，常常把买剩的零钱塞在我的口袋里："拿去！"那神情和给叫花子是差不多的。

我睁眼、僵立。感到莫大的侮蔑。

"拿去吧，是给你奶奶买肉吃的。"

侮蔑被辛酸融化了。我是有个老祖母，是她把我从小带大的，那时已经七十六岁，满嘴没牙，半身不遂，头脑也不是那么清楚的。可是她的胃口很好，天天闹着要吃肉，特别是要吃陆稿荐的乳腐酱方，那肉入口就化，香甜不腻。她弄不清楚物价与货币的情况，在她的头脑中一切都是以铜板和银元计算的。她只知我的哥哥每月要寄回来几千块钱（能买一百多斤米），为什么不肯花二十六个铜板给她称一斤肉回来呢？三百个铜板才合一块钱！她把这一切都归罪于我的妈妈，骂她忤逆不孝，克扣老人，而且牵牵连连地诉述着陈年八代的婆媳关系，一面骂一面流眼泪。妈妈怎么解释也没用，只好一面在配给米里捡石子，一面把眼泪洒在淘米箩里。我在这两条泪河之间把心都挤碎！

当我用朱自冶的零钱买回几块肉来，端到奶奶的床前时，她一面吃，一面骂，一面用颤巍巍的手抚摸着我的头："好孙子，还是你孝顺，奶奶没有白带你……"

我一听这话眼泪便簌簌地往下流，我想大哭，大喊，想问苍天！可是我拼命地哽住喉咙，俯伏在奶奶的床头，把头埋在棉被里。既然在侮蔑中把钱接过来了，为什么不能让奶奶得到一点安慰！

"上有天堂，下有苏杭"啊！这句老话不知

"In heaven there is paradise, on earth Suzhou and Hangzhou." I don't know who invented the saying, nor why they put Suzhou before Hangzhou. It's said to be because Hangzhou became a capital only in the Sourthern Song dynasty while Suzhou was prosperous several hundred years earlier during the Tang. In the last hundred years, as Shanghai became infested with foreign adventurers and ambitious businessmen, those with some foresight all bought property and owned a home in Suzhou. Since it wasn't a political and economic centre, Suzhou had much less official rivalry and was less of an investment risk. It wasn't a strategic military location either. For the last two thousand three hundred years, no war had ever started in Suzhou. It had good weather, rich resources and beautiful scenery. Through the centuries, landlords and officials, rich merchants, butchers who'd put down their knives, scholars who'd failed to move up in the world and ageing courtesans all retreated to Suzhou to pass their remaining years. This concentration of pleasure-seekers made Suzhou a city with the best gardens in the world and the most refined culinary arts. However, scenery doesn't fill the stomach and loses its appeal after a while, whereas three meals a day are indispensable. The real reason for Suzhou being ranked above Hangzhou was perhaps because of its superior food. This Suzhou pride seemed a kind of crime and injustice to me. I wondered if there was a "paradise" in hell, since there was certainly a hell in "paradise" and most people seemed to be

道是谁发明的，而且大言不惭地把苏州放在杭州的前面。据说此种名次的排列也有考究，因为杭州是在南宋偏安以后才“春风熏得游人醉，错把杭州作汴州”。而苏州在唐代就已经是“十万夫家供课税，五千子弟守封疆”了。到了明代更是“翠袖三千楼上下，黄金十万水东西”。近百年间上海崛起，在十里洋场上逐鹿的有识之士都在苏州拥有宅第，购置产业，取其进可以攻，退可以守。苏州不是政治经济的中心，没有那么多的官场倾轧，经营的风险；又不是兵家的必争之地，吴越以后的两千三百多年间，没有哪一次重大的战争是在苏州发生的；有的是气候宜人，物产丰富，风景优美。历代的地主官僚，富商大贾，放下屠刀的佛，怀才不遇的文人雅士，人老珠黄的一代名妓等等，都欢喜到苏州来安度晚年。这么多有钱有文化的人集中在一起安居乐业，吃喝和玩乐是不可缺少的，这就使苏州的园林可以甲天下，那吃的文化也是登峰造极！风景不能当饭，天天看了也乏味，那吃却是一日三顿不可或少的。苏州所以能居于天堂之首，恐怕主要是因为它的美食超过了杭州。这也许是苏州人的骄傲吧，可我那时简直觉得这是一种罪恶，是人间最最不平的表现！我不知道地狱里可有“天堂”，可我知道“天堂”里确有地狱，而且绝大多数的人都在地狱的边缘上徘徊。说老实话，当我开始信仰共产主义的时候，我没有读过《资本论》，也没

poised on its periphery. To be honest, I didn't start becoming a believer in communism by reading *Das Kapital* and the *Communist Manifesto*. I was probably spurred on to it by Zhu and his like, who made me realize that all extravagantly elaborated "isms" were futile and only communism could solve the problems. Zhu could hardly have assumed such important airs if his property had been confiscated.

I softly sang a song which was popular in Beiping:

On the other side of the mountain,
Rich and poor are all the same.
The rich must work to get food,
No one slaves for them.

A simple song, easy enough to sing, but it helped me understand the world and to know which road to take. My future lay on the other side of that mountain.

In the winter of 1948, I decided to go to the liberated areas. I'd read *Iron Stream* and *Debacle* and knew how hard revolution was, so I was feeling quite solemn and heroic, prepared to die on the battlefield.

I was going to fight for Suzhou. That beautiful, suffering city was sending me into battle. Before my departure, I went to the top of Huqiu Hill to bid farewell to Suzhou. That evening I took my insult money and went to buy food for Zhu and some roast pork for my grandmother for the last time. Three days after she discovered her beloved grandson

有读过《共产党宣言》，多半是由朱自冶他们促成的；他们使我觉得一切说得天花乱坠的主义都没有用，只有共产才能解决问题！如果共掉了朱自冶的房产，看他还神气不神气！

我偷偷地唱着一支从北平传来的歌：

山那边呀好地方，
穷人富人都一样，
你要吃饭得做工呀，
没人为你作牛羊。
……

这支歌的曲调很简单，唱起来也用不着尖起嗓门儿费死力，可它却使我从“朱门酒肉臭，路有冻死骨”中找到了出路，出路就在山那边！

我决定到解放区去了，那已经是一九四八年的冬天。我不知道解放区的形势，总以为国民党还很强大，还有美国的原子弹什么的。无产阶级要夺取全国胜利，恐怕还要经过几年、几十年的浴血奋斗！我读过《铁流》与《毁灭》，知道革命的艰难困苦，知道那是血与火的洗礼。所以当时的心情很悲壮，准备去战死沙场。“风萧萧兮易水寒，壮士一去兮不复还！”当时的心情很有点像荆轲辞别高渐离。

我的高渐离便是苏州，是这个美丽而又受难的城市叫我去战斗！临行之前我上了一趟虎丘山，站在虎伏阁上把这美丽的城市再看一遍：再见吧，你的儿子将用血来洗尽你身上的污垢！傍晚，我照样去替朱自冶买小吃，照样买了一块乳腐酱方送到奶奶的床前：吃吧，奶奶，

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had disappeared from home she died of grief.

How profoundly one remembers what happens in one's youth! I erased from my memory the persecution, the humiliations, the insults of the "cultural revolution" as though it were all some fleeting, inconsequential game. But leaving my home and family over thirty years ago is carefully stored away in my memory. Perhaps I prefer to remember honour and forget injury, but why can't I erase the outrages of thirty to forty years ago from my mind? Every time I see films of wounded soldiers struggling to stand up, raising their rifles to charge the enemy, shouting slogans of revenge, my heart aches and tears come to my eyes. Although repeating the same scenes over and over again is boring, I forbid my children to say so and scold them when they do.

A Happy Misunderstanding

I didn't realize I'd get to the liberated area too late, that the gun smoke would already have disappeared, the sound of gunfire already have died away. The soldiers and civilians were at the height of their celebrations, preparing to fight their way across the Yangtse River. Students on their way to the liberated areas were stopped halfway and sent off with the army to work in the cities once they had been taken over. Since I came from Suzhou, knew the layout of the city and understook its beautiful but difficult dialect, I was naturally sent back there. At least I could take people around.

孙子从屈辱中接过钱来为你买肉，这恐怕是最后的一回！我的判断没有错，当奶奶发觉最孝顺的孙子失踪之后，她哭喊了三天便与世永别。

年轻时的记忆多么深刻啊！“文化大革命”期间的挂牌、游街、屈辱、受罪如今已经淡忘了，仿佛那是一场不屑一顾的游戏。可是三十多年前离家别井，暗中告别亲人，向着黑暗猛冲的情景却点滴不漏地保存在记忆里。也许我是欢喜记着光荣而忘掉屈辱吧，可又为什么不把三、四十年前的屈辱也忘记？每当我在电影或电视中看到受伤的战士从血泊中爬起来，举起枪，高喊着报仇的口号向敌人猛扑过去的时候，我的心便会向下一沉，两眼含着泪水。虽然这种镜头看得太多了也觉得老一套，可是这种话我不许孩子们说，孩子们一说我就要骂：“小赤佬，你懂什么东西！”

三 快乐的误会

没想到我进入解放区已经太晚了，淮海战场上的硝烟已经消散，枪炮声已经沉寂。解放区的军民沉浸在欢乐的高潮中，准备打过长江去！我们这些从蒋管区去的学生被半路截留，被编入干部队伍随军渡江去接管城市。我从苏州来，当然应该回到苏州去，因为我熟悉那里的大街小巷以及那种好听而又十分难懂的语言，带个路也方便。至于回到苏州去干什么，谁也没有考虑，如果那时有人提出什么前途、专

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No one cared about what they would do in Suzhou — if we'd brought up the question of our futures, our vocation, wages and accommodation the way young people do today, we'd have been regarded as petty-bourgeois elements sent by the Kuomintang. Revolution was revolution and whatever you did was all right. But the officer in charge of assigning jobs wasn't careless about it and he wanted to make sure people were given work to suit their skills and interests. As a result a cheerful meeting ensued.

He summoned twenty or so students to a temple and made us sit on either side of a table in the middle of the hall. On it were papers, pens and our files.

He was an educated man who had graduated from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Jiaotong University and knew us students quite well. "Now, I'll assign you your jobs and will do my best to see that they fit in with your skills and wishes," he began. "I hop you'll think a little before answering my questions. Once I've assigned you your jobs, you must follow instructions."

But this solemn atmosphere was destroyed by a former classmate of mine nicknamed Bighead Ding. Actually his head wasn't really bigger than normal, but his expensive knowledge of astronomy, geography, history and philosophy made it seem so. He was the first to be called.

"What would you like to do!"

"Anything!" he shot back.

The man rolled his eyes upwards. "What is 'anything'?

业、工资、房子等等，我们这一伙“小资产”便会肯定他是国民党派来的！革命就是革命，干什么都可以，随便。我们的组织部长却不肯随便，一定要根据各人的特长和志趣来分配，因此就出现了十分快乐的场面：

组织部长把我们二十多个学生兵召集到一个祠堂里。祠堂的正中摆着方桌，桌上放着档案和纸笔，二十多人分坐在两边。

组织部长是个大知识分子，早年毕业于交通大学的机械系。他对我们这些小知识分子十分熟悉：“现在要给大家分配工作了，组织上尽量照顾各人的特长和志愿，希望你们在回答问题之前好好地考虑，分定之后就不许犯自由主义。”

当时的气氛本来很严肃，却被我的老同学，诨号叫丁大头的人弄得豁了边。丁大头的头其实也不大，可是他的知识很广博，天文、地理、历史、哲学他样样都懂一点。因为他的脑子里包容的东西太多，所以看起来他的头好像比平常的人大了点。他第一个被部长叫起来：

“你想干什么呢？”

“随便。”丁大头回答得很爽气。

部长翻了翻眼睛：“随便是个什么东西？说得具体点。”

“具体点……那也随便。”

人们哄堂大笑了：“他什么都懂，可以随便！”

Be a little more specific."

"More specifically... anything."

Everyone burse out laughing. "He's a jack-of-all-trades, he can do anything."

The man laughed too and leafed through his file. "Where shall I send a jack-of-all-trades? ... Can you tell me what you're most interested in?"

"Reading."

"Why didn't you say so before? Go to the Xinhua Bookstore."

That one sentence decided Ding's life. He later became the manager of a Xinhua Bookstore, and he was a manager who knew his job.

The second person called was a girl, a beautiful Suzhou girl, attractive in her Lenin-style cotton suit and army cap.

After one look at her, the man asked, "Can you sing?"

"Yes."

"Will you sing something from the *White-haired Girl?*" "The north wind blows...." In those days no one was too shy to sing since we sang every day.

"Good, you work in the cultural troupe."

She didn't do too badly either. Before the "cultural revolution" she was a famous folk singer. You don't hear of her these days; she's probably teaching singing somewhere.

When my turn came, I made a mess of things. I seemed to like everything except gluttony. I din't have any particular skills and couldn't even sing properly.

部长也笑了，翻翻档案："什么都懂的人到什么地方去呢？……我问你，你对什么东西最感兴趣？"

"看书。"

"那你为什么不早说呀，到新华书店去。"

丁大头被一句定终身，后来在某地的新华书店当经理，而且是个很称职、很懂行的经理。

第二个被叫起来的是个女同学，苏州姑娘，长得很美，粗布的列宁装和八角帽使得她在秀丽中透出矫健的气息。

部长向她看了一眼便问："你会唱歌吗？"

"会。"

"来一段《白毛女》试试。"

"北风那个吹……"女同学拉开嗓子便唱。那时我们天天唱歌，谁也不会扭捏。

"好了，好了，到文工团去！"

这位女同学的命运也不坏，"文化大革命"前唱民歌，很有点名气。如今听不见她唱了，这小老太婆也可能是在哪里教徒弟。

轮到我的时候便糟了，我怎么也想不起最欢喜什么，除掉反对好吃之外，我好像对什么都欢喜。我没有任何特长，连唱起歌来都像破竹子敲水缸。

部长等得不耐烦了："难道你一样事情都不会干？"

"会会，部长，我会替人家买小吃，熟悉苏州的饮食店。"我决不能承认万事不通呀，可这一通便出了问题！

"挺好，干商业工作去，苏州的食品是很有

The man asked impatiently, "You don't know anything at all?"

"Yes, I do, I know how to buy special foods for people, and I know all the eating places in Suzhou."

"Right, go to the commercial department. Suzhou is known for its food."

"No, no, please, I hate eating."

"You hate eating? All right. I'll tell the cook to starve you for three days. Then we'll discuss it again. Next...."

Alas, my furture was settled amidst general mirth. But I wasn't depressed, nor would I think of disobeying orders! Yangtse River was surging angrily, the people on its south bank were suffering. We had to rescue them from the abyss of misery and overthrow the old society where people were cruelly exploited. The life-style of parasites like Zhu Ziye had to come to an end. Well, it's beyond your control now, Zhu. We won't let you starve, but you will have to cook your own meals. A'er won't be pulling you around in a rickshaw. You've got legs, you can walk.

I returned to Suzhou and went back to live in the rooms in front of Zhu's house. Zhu treated me with respect: he addressed me as comrade, and I called him manager; he offered me expensive cigarettes, and I declined by producing my own cheaper ones. Don't pull that one on me, I thought. Just after Liberation Zhu was timid, afraid that the Party would put him in prison. Prison food would be hard to swallow.

After a while he was reassured, for during the movements

名的。"

"不不,部长,我对吃最讨厌!"

"你讨厌吃?很好,我关照炊事班饿你三天,然后再来谈问题!下一个……"

完了,命运在一阵哄笑声中决定了。可我当时并不懊丧,也不想犯自由主义,扬子江在怒号,南岸的人民在呼喊,要拯救劳苦大众于水深火热之中,要推翻那人吃人的旧社会;再也不能让朱自冶他们那种糜烂的寄生虫式的生活延续下去!朱自冶呀,朱自冶,这下子可由不得你了。我们决不会让你饿肚子,至少得让你支起个炉灶来烧东西。也不能老是让阿二拉着你,你自己有两只脚,应该是会走路的。

风萧萧兮江水寒,壮士一去兮又复还。我又回到苏州来了,几经转折之后又住在朱自冶的门前。朱自冶对我刮目相看了,他称我同志,我喊他经理;他老远便掏出三炮台香烟递过来,我连忙摸出双斧牌香烟把它挡回去。别跟我来这一套,你那高级烟浸透了人民的血汗,抽起来有股血腥味。朱自冶在解放之初有点儿心虚,深怕共产党会把他关进监牢,那牢饭可不是好吃的!

隔了不久,朱自冶便镇静自若了,因为我们取缔妓女,禁大烟,反霸,镇反,一直到三反五反都没有擦到他的皮。他不抽大烟不赌钱,对妓女更无兴趣,除掉好吃之外什么事儿也没有干过。镇反挨不上他,他不开工厂不开店,谈不上五毒俱全和偷税漏税。所以他经常竖起大拇指对我说:"共产党好,如今没有强盗没有小偷,没有赌场没有烟铺,地痞、流氓、妓女都没

to stamp out prostitution and opium, to struggle against local despots, suppress counter-revolutionaries and so on he was never touched. He was no opium addict, nor did he have an eye for prostitutes. Apart from being a glutton he hadn't really done anything. He would often give me the thumbs-up and say, "The Communist Party is good, getting rid of all the robbers, thieves, ruffians, vagabonds, gambling and opium dens. It's lot better, a lot more stable."

So Zhu was not treated badly and kept right on eating, still riding A'er's rickshaw to restaurants and teahouses, and he still had someone to buy delicacies for him.

Those days I was up to my neck in work from morning till night without even Sundays off. When movements were in full swing I'd sleep in the office. But Zhu was even busier, leaving home before I got up and returning after I was asleep. Every time he got back he would step on the rickshaw bell, making a gong-like noise deep in the night. Sometimes he didn't come back and on summer nights, sated, would sleep in the pavilion in the cool, fragrant park. He gradually gained weight, growing a small paunch. My mother told him, "You're putting on weight, Manager Zhu; people in their forties tend to do that." "It's because I have an easy life," he said. "Now I don't have to worry about thieves and villains. Despite all the money I had, life in the past was hard. I had to remember to give people gifts on their birthdays and on festivals too or they'd beat me up or throw dirt at the rickshaw. We didn't get any peace in the

有了，天下太平，百姓安定，好得很！”他说的可能是真话，可我把他上下打量，心里想，你为什么不说没有赌吃嫖遥呢？赌和嫖你沾不上，吃和遥你是少不了的。等着吧，现在是新民主主义！

朱自冶并没有消极地等待，还是十分积极地吃东西，照样坐着阿二的黄包车上面店，上茶楼，照样找到另一个人帮他跑街买吃的。

那时候我的工作很紧张，没有什么上下班的时间，也没有星期天，没早没晚地干，运动紧张的时候便睡在办公室里。可那朱自冶比我还积极，我起床的时候他已坐着黄包车走了；我睡得迷迷糊糊的时候才听见他的黄包车到了门前。他每逢到家的时候都要踩一下铃铛，那铜铃的响声在深夜的小巷里像打锣似的。他有时候也不回家，仲夏之夜吃饱了老酒，干脆就睡在公园的凉亭里，那里风凉，还有一阵阵广玉兰的香气。他渐渐地胖起来了，居然还有个小肚子挺在前面。妈妈对他说：“朱经理，你发福了，人到了四十岁左右都会发胖的。”可他却说：“不对，我这是心宽体胖。现在用不着担心那些强盗和流氓了，别看我有几个钱，从前的日子也是很难过的。生日满月，四时八节，我得给人家送礼，一不小心得罪了人，重则被人家毒打一顿，轻则被人家向黄包车上掷粪便。就说那个上饭店吧，以前也是提心吊胆的。有一次我们几个人吃得正高兴，忽然有个人走到我们的房间里来，要我们让座位。我不知道他是什么人，拌了几句嘴，结果得罪了流氓头子，被他的徒子徒孙们打了一顿，还罚掉了四两黄金

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restaurants either. One time, a man walked in while we were eating and told us to move. I didn't know who he was and argued with him, but it turned out I upset some gangster boss who had me beaten up and demanded four ounces of gold as an apology from me. You don't get that kind any more; they're either in prison, gone over to the Kuomintang or hiding at home. The restaurants are less crowded and cheaper. I can snooze in the park after a good meal and don't have to worry about pickpockets." He patted his belly. "So I'm getting fat."

I blinked in astonishment listening to him. I'd never expected that revolution meant liberation for him too.

Wakened by his rickshaw bell late at night, I was annoyed that Suzhou was still paradise for people like him. When the labouring masses won their liberation, these parasites benefited too. I couldn't budge Zhu, but now I had the right to publicly preach communism, so I decided to start with A'er, his rickshaw puller.

A'er lived at the lane entrance, just next to the public well. He was about my age, but taller, stronger and better looking. When we were little, we oftern played together and he would always be the one to climb up on the roof if our ball got thrown up there. His father was a rickshaw puller too and came from north of the Yangtse River. When he could no longer work, his son took over. He took Zhu out three times a day and took other customers the rest of the time. He had a good rickshaw with a leather canopy, a horn, a

的手脚钱，现在好了，那些家伙都看不见了，有的进了司前街(苏州的监狱所在地)，有的到反动党团特登记处登了记，一个个都缩在家里。饭店里也清净得多了，人少东西多，又便宜，我吃饱了老酒照样可以在公园里打瞌睡，用不着防小偷！”朱自冶拍拍小肚子：“你看，怎么能不发胖呢！”

我听了朱自冶的话直翻眼，怎么也没有想到，革命对他来说也含有解放的意义！

当我深夜被朱自冶的铃声惊醒之后，心头便升起一股烦恼，这苏州怎么还是他们的天堂？劳苦大众获得解放的时候，那寄生虫也会乘汤下面，养得更肥！我没有办法触动朱自冶，可我现在有了公开宣传共产主义的权利，便决定首先去鼓动拉黄包车的阿二。

阿二住在巷子的头上，在那口公井的旁边。他和我差不多的年纪，却比我生得高大、漂亮、健壮。小时候我和他在巷子里踢皮球，皮球踢上房顶之后总是他去爬屋面。他的老家是苏北，父亲也是拉车的；父亲拉不动了才由儿子顶替。阿二每天给朱自冶拉三趟，其余的时间可以另找生意。他的那辆车是属于“包车”级的，有皮篷，有喇叭，有脚踏的铜铃，冬春还有一条毡毯盖住坐车的膝头。漂亮的车子配上漂亮的车夫，特别容易招揽生意。尤其是那些赶场子的评弹女演员，她们脸施脂粉，细眉朱唇，身穿旗袍，怀抱琵琶，那是非坐阿二的车子不可。阿二拉着她们轻捷地穿过闹市，喇叭嘎咕

foot bell and a blanket to cover customers' knees in spring and winter. A smart rickshaw and a handsome puller attracted a lot of business, especially from pretty artists who were story-tellers or ballad singers, attractively dressed girls with *pipas* under their arms. They felt they had to hire his rickshaw. As A'er wove through the noisy streets, horn bleating and bell ringing, all the pedestrians stared. When they got to the theatre, instead of slowing down he would brake in two steps with his feet firmly gripping the ground and his body leaning backwards, arms pressing the handles tightly, stopping smoothly like a Shanghai limousine. Holding the *pipa*, the actress would get off, wiggling her bottom, looking this way and that before disappearing behind a beaded curtain. What kind of impression would she make if she'd come in a broken-down rickshaw pulled by a hunchbacked old man?

Although A'er was a rickshaw puller, for the abovementioned reasons he had a reasonably good life. When I went over to talk to him he and his family were having supper. The table was laid with a couple of dishes and good rice. His father was sipping wine and had a side dish of goose. I made a little small talk and then came right to the point.

"What do you think, A'er, now that we're liberated?"

An outspoken sort of person, A'er answered, "Things are good. We're no longer kicked around and beaten and the customers always pay their fares."

嘎咕，铜铃叮叮当当，所有的行人都要向她们行注目礼；即使到了书场门口，阿二也不减低车速，而是突然夹紧车杠，上身向后一仰，嚓嚓掣动两步，平稳地停在书场门口的台阶前，就像上海牌的小轿车戛然而止似的。女演员抱着琵琶下车，腰肢摆扭，美目流眄，高跟鞋橐橐几声，便消失在书场的珠帘里。那神态有一种很高雅的气派，而且很美。试想，如果一个标致的女演员，坐上一辆破旧的硬皮黄包车，由一个佝偻蹒跚的老人拉着，吱吱嘎嘎地来到书场门口，那还像个什么样子呢！人们由于在生活中看不到、看不出美好与欢乐，才甘心情愿地花了钱去向艺术家求教的。

由于上述的种种原因，所以那阿二虽然是拉黄包车，家庭生活还是过得去的。我去动员的时候，他们一家正在天井里吃晚饭。白米饭，两只菜，盆子里还有糟鹅和臭豆腐干，他的老父亲端着半斤黄酒在吱吱咂咂地。我寒暄了几句之后便转入正题：

“阿二，现在解放了，你觉得怎么样呢？”

阿二是个性情豪爽的人，毫不犹豫地说出了他的体会：“好，现在工人阶级的地位高了，没有人敢随便地打骂，也没人敢坐车不给钱。”

我听了把嘴一撇：“唉呀，你怎么也只是看到这么一点点，工人阶级是国家的主人，决不是给人家当牛作马的！”

“我没有给人家当牛作马呀！”

“还没有，你是干什么的？”

“拉车。”

“好了，从古到今的车子，除掉火车与汽车

I snorted. "Is that all? The working class are the masters of this country now; we do not slave for others."

"I haven't been slaving."

"Are you sure? What do you do?"

"Pull a rickshaw."

"Right. Down the centuries all vehicles have been drawn by animals except for trains and cars."

"What about a flat cart?"

"That... that's for goods, not passengers. People have legs, they're not ill or crippled. Why should somebody sit legs crossed on a rickshaw while you run in front of him like an animal? Do you call that equality? Do you call that being a master? And what about humanism?"

"Well, you've got a point there." A're drew in his breath.

His father sighed, "We can't do otherwise; that's what they pay us for."

"Money...." I drawled contemptuously. "Do you know where people like Zhu got their money from? They exploited the labouring people and then gave you pennies to make you slave for them."

A're frowned. "That man is quite fussy. He always wants me to go fast and doesn't like being jostled."

I seized this opportunity to tell him what the future would be like when the working people became the real masters of the country.

His interest was aroused. "That'd be something to work for. Dad, let's stop pulling ricksaws, you've been a slave all

之外，都是牛马拉的！"

"小板车呢？"

"哪……那是拉货的，不是拉人的。人人都有两条腿，又没病又不残，为什么他可以架起二郎腿高坐在车子上，而你却像牛马似的奔跑在他的前面！这能叫平等吗？你能算主人吗？还讲不讲一点儿人道主义！"

阿二吸了口气："唏，这倒是真的。"

阿二的爸爸叹了口气："没有办法呀，他给钱。"

"钱……！"我把钱字的音调拉了个高低，表示一种轻蔑："你可知道朱自冶他们的钱是从哪里来的？他们榨取了劳动人民的血汗，你拿了一点血汗之后又把他服侍得舒舒服服地！"

阿二的眉毛竖起来了："可不，那家伙坐车很挑剔，又要快，又怕颠。"

我乘热打铁了："问题还不在于朱自冶呐，我们年轻人的目光要放远点，你看人家苏联……"我滔滔不绝地讲起苏联来了，就和现在的某些人谈美国似的，"苏联的工人阶级，一个个都是国家的主人，不管什么事儿，没有他们举手都是通不过的。他们的工作都是开汽车，开机器，开拖拉机，没有一个是拉黄包车的。"我向阿二爸爸的酒杯乜了一眼："拉车弄几个钱也作孽，仅仅糊个嘴。人家苏联的工人都是住洋房，坐汽车，家里有沙发，还有收音机！半斤黄酒有什么稀奇，人家都喝伏特加哩！"我的天啊，那时根本不知道伏特加是什么，若干年后才喝了几口，原来是像我们在粮食白酒里多

your life." A'er, I knew, wanted to be a car driver, the highest goal for all young rickshaw pullers at the time.

His father lifted his glass. "Finish your supper and go to bed early; you've got to take Zhu to the noodle place in the morning." I'd wasted my breath on him. Well, I'd forget about this conservative old man.

I invited A'er to my place to talk to him more. His consciousness raised, he decided to disobey his father and find another job. I spurred him on. "Good for you. You've taken an important step. The best thing would be for you to go to a factory and be an industrial worker."

A few days later, a despondent A'er came to see me. "I've applied to a lot of places but I can't even get into a restaurant, never mind a factory."

"Don't lose heart, you must hold out at all costs."

"I haven't lost heart, but I'm hungry."

I was worried too. "That's a big problem. We'd better get something sorted out for you."

I gave him some money and went off to the civil service bureau to look up a friend who'd come back to Suzhou the same time I did.

"That's a bit unthinking," he said. "The factory owners are talking about withdrawing their capital and it's difficult to keep the factories open, so how can people expect to get jobs there?"

"Okay, I made a mistake, but we can't let him down; think of something."

加了点水！

阿二和他的爸爸更不知道伏特加了，他们听到这个名词还是第一回。那老头儿还咂咂嘴，他以为伏特加总是和茅台差不多的。

阿二也心动了："哦……呃，那才有奔头。爸爸，我们也不要拉车了，你也当了一世的牛马啦！"阿二当然不是为了伏特加，我知道，他是想开汽车。那时候，年轻的人力车工人最高的理想便是当司机。

阿二的爸爸把酒杯向起一竖："唏……快吃饭吧，吃完了早点睡，明天一早要去拉朱自冶上面店。"白搭，我说了半天他等于没听见。老头儿的思想保守，随他去！

我抓住阿二不放，约他到我家来玩，继续对他讲道理，而且现身说法，拿自己作比："你看我，高中毕业的时候，有个同学约我到西山去当小学教员，每月三担米，枇杷上市吃枇杷，杨梅上市吃杨梅，不要钱。还有个同学约我到香港去上大学，他的爸爸在香港当经理，答应每月给我八十块钱港币，毕业以后就留在他的公司里当职员。我为什么不去呐，人活着不都是为了吃饭，更不能为了吃饭就替资本家当牛马！"除了讲道理以外，我还借了一大堆《苏联画报》给他看，对他进行形象化的教育，说明我们青年人要为这么一种伟大的理想去奋斗，说实在，我所以能讲苏联如何如何，也都是从画报里看来的，画报总是美丽的！

阿二的觉悟果然提高了，也和他的父亲闹翻了，坚决不再拉车，另找职业。我在旁边使劲儿打气："好，你这一步走得对，最好是进厂，当

He thought for a bit. "Well, at the moment I'm registering jobless people to do some work to earn their keep instead of just getting relief."

The work was dredging the small canals in Suzhou, strenuous but useful. The old society had left us with a lot of scum, so we had to clean the canal water and make this Venice of the East live up to its name. Making this paradise more beautiful was one aspect of revolution.

When A'er heard that this was also revolutionary work. he willingly went every day to dredge the canals and carry stones. It was much harder than pulling a rickshaw and he got only three catties of rice a day.

To make ends meet, A'er's father set up a little stall selling onions and ginger. He didn't do badly since he was next to the public well. People often remembered they hadn't got any onions or ginger only while they were washing their vegetables. But the wine and goose disappeared from his table. Every time he saw me the old man turned away angrily. I felt rather apologetic and thought to myself "Don't be mad at me, uncle, some day you'll be able to drink vodka." His anger spurred me on. Every night, when I dragged my way past his door in the deserted lane, I'd think, "I haven't let you down, uncle. I'm not afraid of hard work or fatigue; your A'er and I are fighting for tomorrow."

My mother was very angry with me about A'er. "You ungrateful brat, what did Manager Zhu do to us? It's none of your business if he wants to spend money riding in a rick-

产业工人去!"

隔了不久,阿二垂头丧气地来找我:"我把苏州都跑穿了,别说工厂啦,连饭店里都不收跑堂的!"

我连忙说:"千万要坚持,不要泄气。"

"气倒没有泄,可是肚皮不争气,没饭吃了!"

我听了也着急:"啊,这倒是个严重的问题,再克服一下,我去帮你想想办法。"

我给了阿二几个钱,立刻到民政局去找一位同志,他是和我一起渡江过来的。

那位同志一听就啧嘴:"你这位老兄毛里毛糙地,做事也不考虑考虑,现在有些资本家消极怠工,抽逃资金,不关门就算好的了,你还想到哪里去找职业?"

"好好,我检讨。可你总不能见死不救呀,想想办法吧。"

那位同志沉吟了一下:"这样吧,我正在搞失业工人登记,准备以工代赈,先解决他们的吃饭问题。"

以工代赈的项目是疏浚苏州城里的小河浜,这个工作很辛苦,但也很有意义。旧社会给我们留下了很多污泥浊水,我们要把浊水变清流,使这个东方的威尼斯变得名副其实,使这个天堂变得更加美丽,是我们革命的一个方面。

阿二听说这也是革命工作,二话没说,不讲价钱,天天去挖污泥,抬石头,工作比拉车辛苦几倍,但是每天只有三斤米。

阿二的爸爸也没有办法,为了吃饭,只好

shaw. Now, A'er can't support his family and Manager Zhu has to hail a rickshaw when he wants to go out and sometimes gets caught in the rain."

I decided not to argue with her; she'd suffered enough in the old society. Now that life was better I didn't want her to be upset. Besides, we just saw things differently. She still believed in the old feudal virtues, in loyalty to one's master like servants in classical operas. But it did keep me from working on the man who ran errands for Zhu. He was so old he wouldn't even be able to carry stones like A'er if he lost his job with Zhu.

Zhu suspected I was behind all of this and no longer addressed me as Comrade Gao or offered me cigarettes. If we bumped into one another, he would lower his head and keep on walking. Without seeing his eyes I couldn't tell if he bore a grudge against me or just wanted to avoid me. He always carried a pair of galoshes and an umbrella, for he went out so early in the morning it was difficult to tell what kind of a day it was going to be. He didn't want to be drenched in case he couldn't find a rickshaw. I was secretly pleased. "You'll have to earn your own living sooner or later, Zhu. You might as well start practising now."

The Attack Begins

Perhaps it was something the job-assignment fellow wrote on my file, for all my later jobs were to do with food. Dur-

在门口摆起一个卖葱姜的小摊头。因为他家就住在公井的旁边，人们往往在洗菜的时候才发现忘了在菜场上买葱姜，所以生意还是不错的，只是那一碟糟鹅和半斤黄酒从此绝迹。那老头儿每天见到我时总是虎着眼睛把头偏过去。我的心里也有歉意，总是在暗中安慰着老头："老伯伯，你别生气，总有一天会喝上伏特加的！"我把老头儿的虎眼当作一根鞭子，每天抽一下自己："下劲儿干，争取社会主义的早日胜利！"每当我深夜拖着沉重的双腿走过这空寂无人的小巷时，都要看一看阿二家的窗口，默默地叨念："老伯伯，我高小庭总算对得起你，我没有怕苦，也没有怕累，我和你家阿二都在为明天而奋斗！"

为了阿二的事情，妈妈可生了我的气："你这个不识好歹的东西，朱经理哪一点亏待过我们？人家花钱坐车碍你个屁事呀，你硬要和人家作对，弄得阿二家衣食不周，弄得朱经理出入不便，早晚都要街上去叫车，有时候淋得像个落汤鸡，你这个缺德的东西！"

我决不和妈妈争辩，解放以后再也不能让她流眼泪。何况她的道德观点和我也没法统一，她还相信三从四德，还认为京戏里的那种老家奴十分了不起。只是我听了妈妈的责骂以后，再也不敢去鼓动那个为朱自冶跑街的了，那人是个老头，抬不动石头。

朱自冶对我也有感觉了，再也不喊我高同志，再也不请我抽香烟，在门口碰到我时便把头一低，擦身而去。看不出他的眼神，不知道他对我是恨呢，还是忌？不管怎么样，他的手里总

ing the nationalization of private enterprise I was sent to a private restaurant to be manager since there weren't enough state representatives.

Before Liberation I'd never set foot in the place. I'd just watched well-dressed people go in and out while the beggars crowded around the gate and looked at the delicious food in the display windows. After reading Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*, I always felt that the girl had probably died outside this very restuarant. I'd get there on snowy winter mornings and suddenly feel apprehensive, afraid she'd be lying there dead with her matches scattered all over the ground.

I hated to see arrogant and wasteful behaviour in the restaurant. About one third of the food was usually left uneaten. If I let that continue, what kind of a revolution was I making?

I first of all got the restaurant employees to discuss the kind of people we had been serving. What proportion of them were workers or peasants, and what proportion were landlords or capitalists. This was meant to stir them up because they all knew that peasants never dared set foot in our restaurant; they were scared away by its appearance and cost. One meal cost as much as several bags of rice. They preferred eating at stalls in the Xuanmiao Temple where the food was good and cheap. Workers wouldn't come either except on very special occasions. But they all knew Zhu Ziye's likes and dislikes. Each waiter could recite a long list

算有了一样东西，一个草提包，包里有双套鞋，包口上横放着一把洋伞。他黎明出门时估不透天气，所以都带着雨具，以免叫不到车时淋成落汤鸡。我看了暗中高兴："你迟早得自食其力，应该一样样地学会。"

四　鸣鼓而攻

也许是组织部长在我的档案里写了点什么，所以我的工作转来转去都离不开吃的。全行业公私合营的时候派不出那么多的公方代表，我也只好滥竽充数，被派到某个有名的菜馆里去当经理。

这个菜馆我很熟悉，但在解放前从来没有进去过，只是在门口看见有许多阔绰的人进进出出，看见有许多叫花子围在门前，看见那橱窗里陈列着许多好吃的东西，在霓虹灯的照耀下使人馋涎欲滴。我读过安徒生的童话《卖火柴的小女孩》，总觉得那卖火柴的女孩就是死在这个菜馆的橱窗前。我进店的时候正是冬天，天也常常飘雪，早晨踏着积雪跑到店门口时，我的心便突然紧缩，深怕真的有个卖火柴的女孩倒在那里，火柴盒儿撒满了一地。

我在店里也坐不稳，特别看不惯那种趾高气扬和大吃大喝的行为。一桌饭菜起码有三分之一是浪费的，泔脚桶里倒满了鱼肉和白米。朱门酒肉臭倒变成是店门酒肉臭了，如果听之任之的话，那我还革什么命呢！

我首先发动全动体职工讨论，看看我们这

of regular customers, not one of whom came from the proletariat. During the time when private enterprise was being reformed, the capitalists were very unhappy. For some of them it was the end of this world and they'd often come to the restaurant to get drunk. They'd order a lot of famous Suzhou dishes and toss back one glass of alcohols after another, then tipsily declare, "Eat up, friends, we'll eat our way through their tractor screws." This was a way of attacking socialism, for in those days we looked upon tractors as a symbol of socialism. Socialist agriculture meant big state farms with lots of tractors like those in the Soviet Union.

I took this material, added to it my knowledge about the behaviour, past and present, of Zhu and his friends and wrote a long report, explaining my intention of making changes in the restaurant. It was animated and sincere and an obvious declaration against excessive consumption. My superiors were very pleased and gave permission for me to try out my ideas in my restaurant first and then see about introducing them in other ones.

I set to work. First I took down the neon lights at the door and the coloured lights in the windows. It seemed to me these sorts of lights represented dissipation and luxury and were the cause of dissolution. The old society of lavish display would never be resurrected, so why should we be left with its nauseating remnants?

The inside had to be changed too. We mustn't frighten off workers and peasants. The restauant should be simply fur-

种名菜馆究竟是为谁服务的?到我们店里来大吃大喝的人，到底有多少是工人农民，有多少是地主官僚和资产阶级！用不着讨论，这不过是一种战斗的动员而已。每个职工都很清楚，农民根本不敢到我们的店里来，他们一看那富丽堂皇的门面就害怕，不知道一顿要花几石米!还不如到玄妙观里去坐小摊，味道也不错，最多三毛钱。工人一生之中能来几回?除非他有特殊的事体。可是谁都认识朱自冶，都知道他们的吃法和口味。每一个服务员都背得出一大串老吃客的名单，在那长长的名单中没有一个是无产阶级。其中有几个高级职员的成份难以划定，据老跑堂的张师傅反映，他们有的是老板的亲戚，有的是老板手下的红人，而且都有股份。当然，每天来吃的人并不全是老顾客，你也不能叫所有的吃客都填登记表，写明前六项。可是，老的服务员对判断吃客的身份都很有经验，他们能从衣着、举止、神态，特别是从点菜的路数上看得出，来者绝大部分都不是工人农民，至少曾经有过一段并非工农的经历。

实行对私改造的那段时间，资本家的心情并不全是兴高采烈，也不都想敲锣打鼓，有些人从锣鼓声中好像看到了世界的末日，纷纷到我们的店里来买醉。他们点足了苏州名菜，踞案大嚼，频频举杯。待到酒酣耳热时便掩饰不住了："朋友们，吃吧，吃掉他们拖拉机上的一颗螺丝钉!"这话是一种隐喻，因为那时候我们把拖拉机当作社会主义的标志。一讲到社会主义的农业便是像苏联那样，大农场，拖拉机。"吃掉他们拖拉机上的一颗螺丝钉!"当然是对

nished and have plenty of room.

Why should people eat in small private rooms? They could eat in public with money they'd earned from their labour. Only blood-suckers wanted to eat in hiding. With the partitions knocked down we'd have a lot more room for ordinary labourers to dine in.

The service needed reforming too. The attendants weren't old-time waiters, they were working class. They didn't have to bow and smile, tagging after customers, wiping the tables and chairs with cloths they carried on their shoulders like people in Beijing operas. We were all comrades; why should they be a lower class, why should there be such hypocrisy? And people could fetch their own chopsticks, saucers and cups and whatever else they wanted, just as if they were at home. Who apart from masters didn't set their own tables at home?

These first three reforms the staff approved of and accepted as having a revolutionary flavour. But when I got to reforming the most important thing, the menu, things weren't so easy. Deep-fried fish, snowy chicken balls, crab meat and cabbage hearts... were all so aristocratic, who could afford them? An ordinary dish and an ordinary soup at 50 cents each were enough for one person. I had no objection to some people wanting something better, people had to have a little variety. In the revolutionary army we would often get special treats such as a bowl of stewed pork. Anyway if what I suggested was too simple, we could have something like

社会主义不满，气焰嚣张，语气也是十分刻毒的！

我把收集的材料，再加上我对朱自冶他们的了解，从历史到现状，洋洋洒洒地写了一份足有两万字的报告，提出了我对改造饭店的意见，立场鲜明，言词恳切，材料生动确凿，简直是一篇可以当作文献看待的反吃喝宣言！

领导上十分欣赏我的报告，立即批准在本店试行，取得经验后再推向全行业。

我放手大干了！

首先拆掉门前的霓虹灯，拆掉橱窗里的红绿灯。我对这种灯光的印象太深了，看到那使人昏旋的灯便想起旧社会。我觉得这种灯光会使人迷乱，使人堕落，是某种荒淫与奢侈的表现。灯红酒绿的时代早已一去不复返了，何必留下这丑恶的陈迹？拆！

店堂的款式也要改变，不能使工人农民望而却步。要敞开，要简单，为什么要把店堂隔成那么多的小房间呢，凭劳动挣来的钱可以光明正大地吃，只有喝血的人才躲躲闪闪。拆！拆掉了小房间也可以增加席位，让更多的劳动者有就餐的机会。

服务的方式也要改变。服务员不是店小二，是工人阶级，不能老是把一块抹布搭在肩膀上，见人点头哈腰，满脸堆笑，跟着人家转来转去，抽下抹布东揩西拂，活像演京戏。大家都是同志嘛，何必低人一等，又何必那么虚伪！碗筷杯盏尽可以放在固定的地方，谁要自己去取，宾至如归嘛，谁在家里吃饭时不拿碗筷呀，除非你当老爷！

cabbage and shredded meat, garlic and liver, steamed dish or lion's head meat balls with green vegetables. That would be enough. No working class household ate like that every day.

Objections were raised, all of them from the older employees.

A waiter named Zhang took the lead. Grinning, he began, "Heavens, is our famous restaurant going to be turned into a little cafe? Why don't you do a more thorough job, Mangager Gao? Give each of us two boards and let us set up stalls at the railway station."

I raised my eyebrows. "You can say what you think, comrade, but don't make fun. You're talking about revolutionary work, not joking with customers now," I cautioned him.

"All right, I've no objection. At least we won't have as much work to do," Zhang conceded.

The accountant chipped in, "I could be wrong, Manager Gao, but I'm a bit worried that we might not earn enough money." He spoke hesitantly since he'd been got at in past political movements for being a relative of the restaurant's former owner.

"I've thought about that too, but a socialist enterprise should serve the people instead of just earning money like the capitalists."

"Yes, yes, you're right." He was convinced.

But the celebrated chefs refused to be persuaded. These days they would be ranked among the top chefs and could

以上的三项改革，全店的职工都没有意见，还觉得新鲜，觉得是有了那么一点革命的气息。可是当我接触到改革的实质，要对菜单进行革命时就不那么容易了。

我认为最最主要的是对菜单进行改造，否则就会流于形式主义。什么松鼠桂鱼、雪花鸡球、蟹粉菜心……那么高贵，谁吃得起？大众菜，大众汤，一菜一汤五毛钱，足够一个人吃得饱饱地。如果有人还想吃得好点，我也不反对，人的生活总要有点变化，革命队伍里也常常打牙祭，那只是一脸盆红烧肉，简单了点。来个白菜炒肉丝、大蒜炒猪肝、红烧鱼块、青菜狮子头（大肉圆）……够了吧，哪一个劳动者的家里天天能吃到这些东西？

反对的意见纷纷而来，而且都是从老年职工那里来的。

跑堂的张师傅反对了。他说话有点嬉不溜溜地："啊哈，这下子名菜馆不是成了小饭铺啦！高经理，索性来个彻底的改革吧，每人发两块木板，让我们到火车站去摆荒饭摊。"

我听了把眼睛一抬："同志，有意见可以提，态度要严肃点，这是革命工作，不是和吃客们打哈哈的！"我知道他和资产阶级的老爷太太们周旋了几十年，说话不上路，所以特地点了他一点。

"好好，没意见，这样做我们也可以省点力。"张师傅服了。

管账的也提意见了："高经理，我的意见也可能不正确，只是我有点担心……喏，这样做当然是对的了，可那赢利是不是会有问题？"他

have written books and gone abroad to demonstrate their skills. But back then no one had any particular respect for them, nor did they have any for laymen like me. Especially Yang Zhongbao, who acted as though I'd been flaying him alive.

"So that means we'll just be serving ordinary food, the kind people eat at home," he said.

"What's wrong with that?"

"Why bother going to a restaurant when you can get the same thing at home?"

"People don't cook when they come to Suzhou on business," I reasoned.

"Then they want to try the best food we can offer, and that isn't lion's head meat balls."

"That depends on what kind of people they are."

"All kinds, including cadres like you."

"I get 50 cents a day expenses when I travel on business. If I spend that all on one meal I've still got two meals to pay for." I kept up the struggle.

"Not everyone is like you. People spend their own money too."

"How much have they got? Some of them embezzle public money just because they want to eat good food when they go out," I said, trying another tactic.

"What if you get taken out to dinner?"

"Why should you accept? A lot of people have been corrupted by capitalists through accepting invitations. A lot of

说起话来幽幽缩缩，因为他和原来的老板是亲戚，三反五反时曾经擦破点皮。

“你的担心我也考虑过，可是社会主义的企业是为人民服务，决不能像资本家那样唯利是图！”

“对对，对对对。”管账的马上服帖。

死不服帖的是那几位有名的厨师，如果用现在的职称来评定的话，他们不是一级便是二级。他们可以著书立说，还可以到外国去表演。可我那时并没有把这种宝贵的技术放在眼里，他们也可能没有把我这样的外行放在眼里，特别是那个杨中宝，好像我剜了他的肉似的：

“这不是都卖点儿家常便饭了吗？”

“家常便饭有什么不好呀？”

“家常便饭家家会做，何必上饭店？”

“出门的人哪有背着锅子走路的？”

“出门的人都想尝尝天下的名菜，噢，苏州的名菜就是红烧狮子头？”

“那要看是什么人？”

“什么人都有，包括像你这样的干部在内！”

“我出差每天三毛钱伙食，两毛钱伙补，一顿吃掉五毛钱，还有早晚两顿没有着落哩！”

“不是所有的人都和你一样，他们自己贴。”

“贴，拿什么贴？不少人就是因为出差时嘴馋，才贪污了公款。”

“如果人家请客呢？”

“为什么要请客，拉拉扯扯的。三反五反的

evil deals have probably been worked out right in our privated rooms."

"What about weddings?"

"Even less reason to be extravagant. Buy some sweets and have a party, that's what the government employees do."

Yang flared up. "You're talking like a layman, Manager Gao. Government offices are different from restaurants. Why don't you transfer me to a government office to be a canteen cook? I'll gladly go."

I glared at him, holding back what was on the tip of my tongue. I couldn't lose my temper with an old chef who'd worked longer than I'd lived, who had always been a member of the proletariat while I was an ex-student who belonged to the petty-bourgeoisie, something which couldn't be changed no matter how revolutionary I was now. At any rate, they had reason to object since their skills wouldn't be any use. Cabbage and shredded meat didn't require any high degree of skill; even I could do that.... It would be a pity if their talents went to waste. It would be better for him to go and cook for a foreign affairs department rather than in a mass canteen.

The room fell silent.

I turned to the younger ones, having discovered that the best way to save a situation was to stir them up a little. Even if they went too far it could still be put right later on.

"Haven't you young people got anything to say? You're in charge of this restaurant too; the future belongs to you."

教训还不够吗？不少人被资本家拉下水，就是从请客吃饭开始的，说不定那些见不得人的勾当，就是在我们楼上的小房间里干出来的！"

"人家结婚呢？"

"结婚更不能铺张浪费，买几斤糖，开个联欢会，我们机关里就是这样干的。"

杨中宝火了："高经理，你说的都是外行话，机关是机关，饭店是饭店。请你把我调到机关里去当炊事员吧，保证没意见！"

我看着杨中宝直翻眼，把到了嘴边的话咽回去。我不能对一个老工人发脾气，他的工龄和我的年龄差不多，是地地道道的无产阶级，而我的本人成份是学生，属于小资产阶级，再怎么革命也是革不掉的，只好暂时忍耐一点。何况他们所以反对也有道理，因为这一改他们就没有用武之地了。白菜炒肉丝不需要什么高超的手艺，连我都会……是呀，他们的技术不能发挥，也很可惜。调到机关里去当炊事员虽然是气话，调到交际处去当炊事员倒是很合适的……

会场沉寂。

我要设法打开僵局，目光便向青年人投射过去。那时候我已懂得，如果遇事打不开局面，最好是鼓动青年人起来带头。他们不保守，有闯劲，闯过了警戒线也无妨，然后再向回拉一点。矫枉必须过正，也许就是这个道理。

"青年同志们谈谈嘛，你们也是店里的主人，未来是属于你们的，谈谈。"

年轻的职工们只是笑，看看老师傅又看看我，两边都为难，一时拿不定主意。内中有个小

英汉对照
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They only smiled, caught between the older chefs and me. One young waiter, Bai Kunnian, still only an apprentice, spoke very convincingly:

"Our restaurant must carry out thoroughgoing reforms. We will not serve rich people any more; we must genuinely serve workers, peasants and soldiers. And our menu must show it. They can't afford crab meat and cabbage hearts. The cabbage hearts are put in that dish while they get the outer leaves. Stir-fried cubed chicken uses only chicken breast, and the claws and the heads are sold to rickshaw pllers. This is a way of looking down on the labouring people. Once when a peasant came in and ordered beancurd soup he was sent away to the Xuanmiao Temple. This was a nasty trick because the Xuanmiao Temple only serves jellied beancurd. Yet when people like Zhu Ziye turn up, the waiters and chefs get cracking right away. He gets live fish, huge prawns and the tenderest cabbage hearts."

Once Bao started, the others followed, criticizing the wastefulness in the restaurant and the way we took special care over big banquets but neglected small customers. A lot of these things I hadn't known and they infuriated me. I rapped the table, "Don't you see how badly in need of reform we are?"

Zhang hung his head in silence, possibly for having sent the peasant away. The chefs were silent too. Suzhou cuisine required a lot of superior ingredients and that made waste inevitable. And of course people like Zhu got taken good care

伙子，名字叫作包坤年，跑堂的，虽然还没有满师，讲话却是很有水平的：

"同志们，我们的店必须改革，必须彻底地改革！再也不能为那些老爷们服务了，要面向工农兵。面向工农兵决不是一句空话，要拿出菜单来作证明。烧什么菜，就是为什么人。蟹粉菜心不仅工农兵吃不起，而且还要跟着老爷们受罪！为什么，菜心都给他们吃了，菜帮子都到了工农兵的碗里！生炒鸡丁要用鸡脯，鸡头鸡脚都卖给拉黄包车的，这分明是对工农兵的瞧不起。农民进店来点只豆腐汤，有人竟然回生意：'嘿，吃豆腐汤到玄妙观去吧，那里的豆腐汤又好又便宜。'玄妙观只卖豆腐脑，分明是捉弄乡下人的。要是朱自冶他们来了就不得了，从堂口到厨房，都是忙得飞飞地。鱼要活的，虾要大的，一棵青菜剥剩了手拇指那么一点点……"

包坤年这么一带头，人们就跟着发表意见，纷纷揭露我们的浪费，以及重视筵席而看不起小生意。这些情况我以前都不了解，听了十分生气，把手指在桌面上敲敲："你看，你们看，不改革怎么得了呢！"

跑堂的张师傅低头不语了，回掉农民的生意可能就是他干的。几个厨师也不讲话了。苏州名菜选料精细，浪费肯定是有的；围着朱自冶之类的人转也不假，名厨要靠吃家，要靠他们扬名，要靠他们品出那千分之几的差别。最好能碰上孔夫子，孔子曰："食不厌精，脍不厌细！"

改革方案就这么定下来了，包坤年是立了

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of. Chefs relied on gourmets to spread their fame and describe the most subtle nuances of every dish.

Our policy was thus settled, thanks to Bao. He was later very active and carried out my instructions to the letter. I also gave him whatever help he needed to make progress.

He beat me half to death in the "cultural revolution", but that's another story. . . .

I threw myself into the reforms and never got home before eleven at night. I got the interior and facade altered, put up blazing red notices and sent a write-up to the local paper entitled *Famous Restaurant Serves Inexpensive Dishes to Ordinary People*.

The first day a lot of people came — old men and women with their grandchildren, rickshaw pullers, vendors and people on business trips to Suzhou. Rickshaws, pedicabs and carriages lined the street outside. I'd seen this kind of commotion before Liberation when rich men and their wives came. While they were eating and enjoying themselves upstairs their rickshaw pullers would be out shivering in the cold. Now these same shivering people were striding into the restaurant, heads held high. Human voices and the scraping of tables and chairs rose together in a hubbub. The atmosphere was electric. The waiters brought the food quickly since the dishes were cooked in large quantities and ladled out. Going in and out, people kept to the right as though they were in traffic. The restaurant was thronged with customers.

功的，他后来表现得也十分积极，我指向哪里他打向哪里。我也为他的进步创造了很多有利的条件。至于他在“文化大革命”中把我打得半死，那是后话，暂且不提……

我当时把全部精力都扑在改革上，每晚回家都在十一点之后。我改了店堂，换了门面，写了大红海报张贴街头，还向报馆里投了稿，标题是：名菜馆面向大众，大众菜经济实惠！

开张的那一天，景象是十分壮观的。老头老太结伴而来，还搀着小孙子、小妹妹。那些拉车的、挑担的、出差的，突然之间都集中到店门口。门前的黄包车，三轮车，马车停了一长溜。这种车水马龙的情景解放前我也曾见过，可那是拉着老爷太太们来的；老爷太太们美酒高楼，拉车的人却瑟缩在寒风里。如今瑟缩的人们都站起来了，昂首阔步地进入店堂，把楼上楼下两个像会场似的堂口都挤得满满的。一时间板凳桌子乒乓响，人声鼎沸如潮水，看起来有点混乱，可那气氛实在热烈！服务员上菜也很迅速，大众菜，大众汤都用不着现做，汤装在木桶里，菜装在大锅里，一杓一大碗，川流不息地送出去。店门口的行人要靠右走，进去连成两条线，如果用门庭若市来形容，那是十分贴切的。

朱自冶和他的吃友们居然也来了，很好，我倒要看看你们今天想吃点什么东西！谁知道他们先在门口看看广告，再到店堂里瞧瞧热闹，俯下身去看看大众菜，鼻子嗡了那么几嗡，然后带着不屑一顾的神情走出去，还相互拍拍打打地发笑哩！我见了义愤填膺：“反对吧，先

Surprisingly, Zhu and his friends came too. Right, I wanted to see quite what they'd eat today. They read the notice outside, came in and looked around, bent down and scrutinized the dishes. Sniffing in contempt, they left, slapping each other on the back and sniggering. I was furious. "Go ahead and oppose me, sirs; that's exactly why I want to change this place."

But the reaction of the old men and women was quite different. "Before we just heard about this place but never dared come in. Today we've really seen something."

One peasant choosing his meal observed, "Whenever I came here in the past I always had to go to the kitchens through the back door to deliver vegetables. I never dared poke my head into the restaurant."

Their praise made me forget my fatigue and touched me deeply. No matte how history assessed my work during this period, I firmly believed I was whole-heartedly and selflessly engaged in working in a great cause.

Our superiors paid a visit and were very satisfied. Although things were still a little chaotic, this was considered inevitable at the outset and we were asked to summarize and relay our experience to other restaurants.

A Happy Outcome

Zhu had been driven to the wall. Although a lot of the other famous restaurants didn't really follow suit and just

生们，我改革的目标就是要叫你们反对！”

老头老太的反映可就不同了：“啊哟，以前只听说这家菜馆有名，越有名越不敢来，今天可算见了世面！”

挑菜的农民也说了：“这菜馆我以前来过几回，都是挑着青菜进后门，一直送到厨房里，从来不敢向店堂里伸头！”

多么深刻的写照呀，多么自豪的语言，人民的称赞使我忘记了疲劳，感动得心都发抖。不管将来的历史对我这一段的工作如何评价（放心，它无暇顾及），可我坚信，当时我绝无私心，我是满腔热忱地在从事一项细小而又伟大的事业！

当时，我们的领导也到了现场，看了也很满意，虽然秩序有点混乱，那也是前进中的缺点，要我们好好地总结提高，然后推向全行业。

五 化险为夷

这一下朱自冶可就走投无路了！尽管我们的经验很难推开，许多名菜馆都是敷衍了事，弄几只大众菜放在橱窗里装装门面。可是风气一开那苏州名菜便走了味，菜名不改，价钱不变，制作却不如从前那么精细。朱自冶有一张什么样的嘴啊。他能辨别出味差的千分之几哩！一吃便摇头，便皱眉，便向人家提意见。朱自冶看错皇历了，这时候再也没有人把他当作朱经理，资本家三个字也不是那么好听的。有

made do with showing a few ordinary dishes in their windows, their specialities deteriorated in quality. The same dish at the same price was cooked with much less care. As soon as he tasted the difference, Zhu would frown, shake his head and complain. But he was misjudging the situation. No one paid any particular attention to him any more, no one called him Manager Zhu. A property owner, though still rich, no longer had any clout. Waiters weren't allowed to accept tips. It was up to you whether you came in or not; the volume of business didn't affect people's salaries. Anyone taking much notice of Zhu's complaints would be labelled "a servant of the bourgeoisie". Every meal was torture for Zhu and his stomach. He never ate his fill, and looking at the food gave him indigestion. He wandered around like a lost soul, buying pastries which he'd find weren't as good as before and then leave them to go mouldy till my mother threw them away. His little paunch slowly dwindled.

One night, a tipsy Zhu pushed open my door and announced, "I... oppose what you stand for, Manager Gao."

The bourgeoisie was counter-attacking. "Your opposition is welcome."

"You're making a mess of Suzhou cuisine; you're unfair to Suzhou."

"That's only your opinion. I haven't made a mess of anything. I don't make the landlords and capitalists very happy to be sure, but I think I've served the people of Suzhou well."

钱又怎么样，不许收小费，你爱吃便进来，嫌丑请出去，反正营业额的大小和工资没有关系。如果依了你朱自冶的话，还要落得个为资产阶级服务的臭名气！

朱自冶怎么受得了呀，他每吃一顿便是一阵懊丧，一阵痛苦，一阵阵的胃里难受。每天都觉得没有吃饱，没有喝够，看到酒菜又反胃。他精神不振，毫无乐趣，整天在大街上转来转去，时常买些糕点装在草包里，又觉得糕点也不如从前，放在房间里都发了霉，被我的妈妈扫进垃圾堆。那个很有气派的小肚子又渐渐地瘪了下去。

有一天晚上，朱自冶居然推门而入，醉醺醺站在我的面前："高小庭，我……我反对你！"

资产阶级开始反扑了，这一点我早有准备："请吧，欢迎你反对。"

"你把苏州的名菜弄得一塌糊涂，你你，你对不起苏州！"

"这是你的看法，菜碗没有打翻，一塌糊涂是谈不上的。是的，我对不起苏州的地主和资产阶级，对苏州的人民我可以问心无愧！"

"你你……你对不起我！"

"是的，应当对不起你，因为你自己也是资产阶级！"

"小庭啊，人可要凭点儿良心，这些年来我可没有亏待过你！"

朱自冶语无伦次了，他竟然想揭下伤疤当膏药贴，这就惹得我火起："朱经理，我是对不起你，也对不起你的朋友；你的朋友中有三个是地主，有两个是在反动党团特的册子上登过

"You.... You're ungrateful to me."

"That's right; that's to be expected because you belong to the bourgeoisie."

"But I've been kind to you, Xiaoting."

Zhu was tactless enough even to compliment himself for behaviour which had wounded my pride. I flared up. "I haven't made you or your friends happy, Manager Zhu. Three of them were landlords, two belonged to reactionary groups while you and two others still live on money the state gives you as compensation for your investments. Don't think you'll get that for ever."

Startled, Zhu sobered up and retreated a few steps. I declined the high-quality cigarette he quickly offered and took out one of my cheaper ones. He put the cigarette to his lips and inhaled.

"Ah, somebody bought me a chicken today somewhere outside Suzhou which was just as good as the ones I used to eat, so I ended up having a few too many. I don't even know how I got here; where's the door?" He turned to go.

"Wait."

He halted.

"Manager Zhu, I should have shown you my gratitude by warning you to change your way of living and learn to earn your own keep."

"Right, right, I'll bear that in mind."

After that, I didn't see much of him and he never came to complain again, I often asked my mother about him. She

记的，还有三个是拿定息的，包括你自己在内。别以为定息可以拿到老，这资产阶级总有一天要被消灭！”

朱自治吓了一跳，以为我们的政策又要改变。对他来说吃当然很重要，消灭却是性命攸关的。他的酒意消掉了一半，不由自主地向后退，掏出一根前门牌塞过来，被我用飞马牌挡回去。他乘势把香烟一叼，吸了一口：“该死，今天托人到常熟去买了一只叫花子鸡，味道还和从前一样，不免多喝了几杯，这就糊里糊涂地跑到你家来了。咦，我是从哪个门里进来的呢！”朱自治想夺门而走了。

“慢点！”

朱自治站住了。

“朱经理，如果我有什么地方对不起你的话，那就是我没有告诉你一句最要紧的话：你再也不能这样下去了，要逐步地学会自食其力！”

“是是，我一定铭记。”

从此以后，我很少碰到朱自治，他当然也不会再来向我表示反对。我对他倒是十分关心，常常向妈妈问起。妈妈说她也不清楚，经常不见朱自治回家，房间里一股霉味。我想，朱自治也许是去干什么了吧，吃是终身的必需，总不能是终身的职业。

隔了不久，包坤年来向我汇报——他经常向我汇报。

“不得了，杨中宝他们开地下饭店了，是专门为资本家服务的，每天晚上赚大钱！”

“可当真？”

didn't know much either except that he was seldom home and his room had a mouldy smell. He must be out doing something, I thought. Eating was his permanent necessity but it couldn't be his lifelong profession.

A while later, Bao gave me a report — he always used to report things to me.

"Chef Yang has opened an underground restaurant specially for capitalists and is earning a packet every night."

"Are you sure?'

"Absolutely, I saw it with my own eyes. It's in No. 54, east of where you live. Every night a lot of these capitalists go there. Yang cooks while a seductive-looking woman collects the money."

If there was any truth in what Bao said, how could I ignore it? I made investigations, sounded Yang out and unearthed Zhu's retreat.

No. 54 was the home of a woman named Kong Bixia, the former concubine of a politician-cum-professor, and her three tenants. She was not unusual among Suzhou residents. It was said she'd been as beautiful as a goddess when young, had been taught by a famous opera singer, and had even played a part in *The Goddess Scattering Flowers*. But even a goddess loses her attaction after forty, and on the eve of Liberation her husband abandoned her and her eight-year-old daughter and fled to Hongkong.

Probably because she'd once been on stage, Kong still liked doing herself up, and her every movement and glance

“一点不假，是我亲眼看见的，地点就在你家东面的五十四号里，天天晚上有许多资本家在那里聚会，杨中宝烧菜，一个妖里妖气的女人收钱！”

包坤年说得有根有据，我怎能不问不理？立刻到居民委员会去调查，找杨中宝来谈话，一问一查又找到了朱自冶的踪迹。

朱自冶开始隐退了，他对饭店失望之后，便隐退到五十四号的一座石库门里。这门里共有四家，其中一家的户主叫作孔碧霞。孔碧霞原本是个政客的姨太太，这政客能做官时便做官，不能做官时便教书，所以还有教授的头衔。苏州小巷里的人物是无奇不有的。据说，年轻时的孔碧霞美得像个仙女，曾拜名伶万月楼为师，还客串过《天女散花》哩！可惜的是仙女到了四十岁以后就不那么惹人喜爱了，解放前夕，那政客不告而别，逃往香港，把个孔碧霞和一个三岁的女儿遗弃在苏州。

孔碧霞年轻的时候打扮惯了，也可能是由于登过台的关系，所以举手投足、顾盼摆扭等等都讲究个形体美。讲究得过了分便变成矫揉造作、搔首弄姿；特别是在无姿可弄而要硬弄时便有点怪里怪气。苏州话骂人也不是那么好听的，人家暗地里叫她“干瘪老阿飞”。

朱自冶一贯地不近女色，为什么突然之间和孔碧霞混到一起去呢？很简单，那孔碧霞烧得一手好菜！

孔碧霞数十年的风流生涯，都是在素手作羹汤中度过的。她丈夫的朋友都是政界、实业界、文化界的高雅得志之士，像朱自冶这样的

was intended to look beautiful. When overdone, however, it was affected and coquettish — a little strange, in fact, since there was not much left to be coquettish about.

Zhu, who had never had any interest in women, got mixed up with Kong simply because of her marvellous cooking. Kong had prepared many banquets for her husband and his friends, men from political, industrial and cultural circles who were socially a cut above Zhu. To them Zhu was nothing more than a rich man and a glutton. No true gourmet dined in restaurants all the time. None of the banquets in *A Dream of Red Mansions* were in restaurants. First-batch noodles were nothing to them. They were people who sipped tea in moonlit gardens and drank wine by balustrades overlooking streams. It was indecorous to eat roast pork that came wrapped in lotus leaves and fermented beancurd strung together with a rice stalk in noisy inns. People of taste and influence went to restaurants only when social occasions required them to and then only picked at the rich, greasy food. The pots and spatulas were not washed between cooking, so the food always had a mixed smoky taste. To them Zhu's delicacies were coarse fare indeed. What they ate belonged to another school of Suzhou cuisine, the crystallization of the highest forms of material and cultural accomplishment. Food as an art found its full expression in this kind of cooking.

Kong belonged to this school. When she'd been a celebrated concubine in social and cultural circles she sang opera,

人是休想登堂入室的。什么美食家呀，在他们看起来，朱自冶只不过是个肉头财主，饕餮之徒，吃食癞皮。哪有一个真正考究吃的人天天上饭店?“大观园”里的宴席有哪一桌是从“老正兴”买来的?头汤面算得什么，那隔夜的面锅有没有洗干净呢!品茶在花间月下，饮酒要凭栏而临流。竟然到乱哄哄的酒店里去小吃，荷叶包酱肉，臭豆腐干是用稻草串着的，成何体统呢!高雅权贵之士，只有不得已时才到饭店里去应酬，挑挑拣拣地吃几筷，总觉得味道太浓，不清爽，不雅致。锅、勺、笊篱不清洗，纯正的味儿中混进杂味，而且总有那种无药可救的，饭店里特有的油烟味!朱自冶念念不忘的美食，在他们看起来仅仅是一种通俗食物而已。他们开创了苏州菜中的另一个体系，这体系是高度的物质文明和文化素养的结晶，它把苏州名菜的丰富内容用一种极其淡雅的形式加以表现，在极尽雕琢之后使其反乎自然。吃之所以被称作艺术，恐怕就是指这一体系而言的。

孔碧霞的烹调艺术，就是得之于这一派的真传。她在当年的社交界是个极其有名的姨太太，会唱戏，会烧菜，还会画几笔兰花什么的。二十多年间她家的庭院里名流云集，两桌麻将让八个男人消遣，一桌酒席由她来作精彩的表演。她家有一个高级的厨娘，这高级的厨娘也只能当她的下手!

朱自冶被逼得走投无路之后，偶尔听他的一位吃友谈起，说是五十四号里有个孔碧霞，此人当年如何如何，如何身怀绝技。

cooked and painted. For over twenty years, distinguished people gathered at her home to play mahjong and feast. She also employed a good cook but only as her assistant.

Just when Zhu felt totally disappointed, somebody told him about Kong.

"You're kidding, my friend," he laughed. "I don't think home cooking can be so good. People don't have as many ingredients or as big a stove and pots as they do in restaurants."

"I don't know how I can prove it to you. In the past she wouldn't have given people like us a second look. I never managed to be invited to her place before Liberation.... But I hear she's come down in the world in the last few years and is hard up for money, so maybe she just might prepare a banquet for us. You two are neighbours, why don't you ask her and see?"

Zhu was desperate to find somewhere to eat so he decided to make a visit and put forward the proposal.

Before Liberation Kong would have thrown him out. But now, unlike Zhu, she had neither income nor any property compensation and had to rent parts of her house out to three families. Even with this, she still had to sell pieces of furniture and jewelry from time to time. She was also keen to practise her cooking skills and win praise the way she had in the past. All the same, she didn't give her consent right away.

"Oh Mr Zhu, who's been telling stories about me? I only

朱自冶一听便笑了："你老兄是说说解馋的吧，好菜怎么能家里做呢。你没有那么多的佐料、高汤，没有那么大的炉火与油镬，办不成的。"

"不信？那也没有办法，我请不动那位尊神。她根本就不把我们这些人放在眼里。解放前我想尽天法也没有打得进去……对了，近几年来听说她的家境不好，手头拮据，也许看了孔方兄的面上，能为我们操办一席。你家和她靠近，去试试。"

朱自冶病急乱投医了，他为了吃总会干出一些冒冒失失的事体；他冒冒失失地去敲五十四号的大门，径直说明来意。

如果是在解放前的话，孔碧霞不把朱自冶赶出来才怪呐！可那孔碧霞不如朱自冶，她没有那么多的存款和定息，已经把房子租给了三家，还得靠变卖家具和首饰度日。同时她也多年不操此道，有点技痒难熬，很想重新得到别人的称赞，再现昔日的风流。她内心已经许诺，表面上还要搭搭架子：

"啊呀，朱先生，倷（你）是听啊里（哪里）一位老先生活嚼舌头根，倷尼（我们）女人家会做啥格（什么）菜呢，从前辰光烧点小菜，是呒没（没有）事体弄弄白相（玩儿）格！"这女人的一口苏白像唱歌似的好听，可惜写出来却不是那么好懂的。

朱自冶当然懂罗，涎皮搭脸地恳求着："行行好吧，不管你办什么我们都吃，总归要比饭店里好点。"

"饭店！……"孔碧霞十分轻蔑地拉长了声

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used to cook to amuse myself," she said in her lilting Suzhou dialect.

Zhu took the hint and unashamedly begged her, "Please do us this favour. Anything you do would be preferable to what we could get in restaurants."

"Restaurants!" Kong drawled contemptuously, "I don't understand how you men can bear to eat restaurant food. The smell alone is enough to put you off."

Zhu was stunned. What sort of smell did she mean? Some of them had wonderful aromas, ones which really picked up your appetite. But he said, "Yes, we're vulgar people who don't know anything about food at all. Please open our eyes for us."

"Very well, I'll try to do what I can. How many will there be?"

Zhu counted, "Nine altogether."

"No, no more than seven, You can't cook good food in large portions."

"How about eight? That'll be the right number to fill a table."

"You don't know the rules, Mr Zhu. One place must be for the cook."

"I beg your pardon," he said, wondering about cooks joining the meal. But to satisfy his palate, he had to go along with the rules. He produced a wad of notes and counted out fifty yuan. This he laid on the table, intending to give a ten yuan tip.

音:"你们男人家真没出息,闻了饭店的那股味道之后居然还吃得下东西!"

朱自冶目瞪口呆了,饭店里有什么味道?有的是美食的香味,闻了以后才胃口大开哩!"啊,是是,我们这些人都是凡夫俗子,吃了一世什么也不懂,赏个光吧,让我们开开眼界。"

"好吧,那就献丑了,你们几个人呢?"

朱自冶默算了一下,把食指一环:"九个。"

"不行,最多只能七个,人多是没好食的。"

"那就八个,正好一桌。"

孔碧霞笑了:"朱先生,你不懂规矩,那下手的一个位子是给烧菜的人留着的。"

"好好,对不起。"朱自冶嘴里叫好,心里犯疑,哪有厨师上桌的?为了吃也只好迁就了,随即从身边掏出一叠钞票,数了五十元放在桌子上,心里盘算,这十块钱就算是小费。

孔碧霞面有难色了:"哎呀,这几个钱吃点什么呢?"

朱自冶把心一横,八十块全部豁出去,买个面子。

孔碧霞迟疑了半晌,好像在那里算账,最后乜了朱自冶一眼:"好吧,不够的地方我也凑个份子。唉,你这人也实在可怜!"

事情就这样定下了,孔碧霞足足地准备了五天。据说还有一只红焖鳗没有来得及做,因为买回来的鳗鱼必须先用特殊的方法养一个星期,而那朱自冶又馋得等不及。

至于这一顿到底吃了些什么,我没有参加,不能乱吹。

杨中宝是参加了的。那一天他正好休息,

Kong looked a little hesitant. "Goodness, what can we get with so little money?"

The determined Zhu put the rest of his money down, eighty yuan all told.

Kong hesitated for a while as if calculating something. Glancing up at him, she finally said. "All right, if it's not enough, I'll put some money in too. You're a sorry lot."

Kong spent five days making preparations. People said she had to give up her plan to include eel in the menu because the eel had to be kept alive in a special manner for a week first, but Zhu just couldn't wait that long.

I didn't go to the banquet, so I can't really tell you what they had.

Yang was there. He'd happened to run into Zhu while he was notifying his friends of the feast. One of them had fallen ill, and he had to find a replacement. "Come with me, it'll be an eye-opener for you," he told Yang, explaining his arrangement with Kong, and expressing again his disappointment with my restaurant.

A good cook himself, Yang never thought much of other people's cooking. Moreover, all the famous chefs were men, and he doubted a woman's ability. But he'd also heard from his master that ever since the end of the Qing dynasty, high-class brothels in Suzhou had served excellent food prepared by beautiful, intelligent women as exquisitely as if they were doing embroidery. He didn't have much else to do anyway, so why shouldn't he accept the invitation and learn

在大街上碰到了朱自冶。朱自冶是去通知他的吃友们准时上阵的，没想到有位老友因病不起，需要另找候补的。看见杨中宝便说："走走，跟我去见见世面。"接着便把如何找到孔碧霞等等说了一遍。连说带吹，借以发泄对我们饭店的怨气。

杨中宝从来不服人，艺高人总有那么点傲气。名厨师都是男人，哪来这么个女的！可是他也听他师傅说过，在清末民初的时候，苏州有一种堂子菜，是从高等妓院里兴起来的。做这种菜的全是聪敏漂亮的女人，连丑丫头都不许帮道，那做工细得像绣花似的。他反正闲着没事，那朱自冶又不用他出钱，何不趁此去见识见识，如果真有可取的话也可学点技术；如果言过其实的话也可把朱自冶揶揄一顿，煞煞他的锐气！

杨中宝只向我讲了事情的来龙去脉，说明他没有开地下饭店，同时对这种捕风捉影的小报告十分恼火，说是有人和他过不去。他一气之下就不谈孔碧霞了，而是缠着我把他调到交际处去。这事儿很快就办成了，所以我一直不知道那天晚上孔碧霞如何大显身手，究竟吃了些什么稀世的美味！读者诸君也不必可惜，在往后的年月里我们还会见到她表演。"文化大革命"可以毁掉许多文化，这吃的文化却是不绝如流。

我当时只能从朱自冶的行动上来进行推测，肯定那天晚上的一桌菜是"此曲只应天上有，人间哪得几回闻！"

朱自冶一吃销魂，从此很少见到他的踪

something? If the food wasn't as good as Zhu had described he could make fun of him and take him down a peg.

Yang was furious at the groundless accusation that he was running an underground restaurant and demanded to be transferred to a foreign affairs department. That was done quickly, so I never knew what skills Kong had displayed that evening.

Zhu's behaviour showed that it must have been a superb meal.

From then on, Zhu was seldom seen and stopped wandering about aimlessly. He never again went to the noodle place early in the morning and ate all his meals at Kong's. Soon the two of them, a rich man with a good appetite and an excellent cook and good shopper, linked up in marriage.

So Zhu finally married. A man who already had countless houses got himself a home at 45. A home is a wondrous thing; it can serve as a curb, can civilize a person. Zhu became decorous and decent, wearing smart suits with two fountain pens clipped to his breast pocket like a scholar. Kong spruced him up along the lines of her former husband.

Kong's housekeeping was as good as her cooking. After their marriage, she got Zhu to move in with her and moved her three tenants to Zhu's place. Her house had a little walled garden with trees, bamboos, rocks, a pool and bridge. They could live in seclusion and eat anything they liked. In those days, there were a lot of people who were opposed to good eating and fine clothes and who considered

影。他再也不像没头苍蝇似的在街上乱转，再也听不到他清晨开门去赶朱鸿兴；他不食人间烟火了，一日三餐都吃在孔碧霞的家里。一个会吃，一个会烧；一个会买，一个有钱。两人由同吃而同居，由同居而宣布结婚，事情顺理成章，水到渠成。

朱自冶终于成家了，一个曾经有过无数房屋的人，到了四十五岁上才有了家庭！家庭是个奇妙的东西，它会使人变得有了关栏，言行举止也规矩了点。朱自冶稳重些了，注意言谈，也注意外表。衣着和过去大不相同。笔挺的中山装，小口袋里插着两支钢笔，颇有点学者风度，这恐怕是孔碧霞参照她前夫的形象加以塑造的。

那孔碧霞不仅会烧菜，治家也是能手。结婚以后她千方百计地调整住房，让朱自冶搬过去，把五十四号里的三户人家搬过来。三户人家的住房面积都有了扩大，她自己也不蚀本。因为那五十四号是个中式的庭院，有树木竹石，池塘小桥，空间很大，围墙很高，大门一关自成天地，任他们吃得天昏地黑也没人看见。那时候，像我这样的反吃战士比较多，还有反穿的；谁要是考究饭菜，讲究衣着，那就有被斥之为资产阶级的危险，或者说是和资产阶级的思想沾了边。所以有钱的人也不得不稍加隐蔽，关起门来吃，吃到肚子里谁也看不见！当然，完全看不见也不可能，人们每天早晨都看见朱自冶夫妇上菜场。两个人穿着整齐，一个拎篮，一个拎包，一个人的膀子套在另一个人的膀子里，惹得行人侧目而视，嗤溜一声："干

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anyone who ate and dressed well as bourgeois. Therefore the rich had to eat behind closed doors. No one knew what they had in their stomachs. Of course people couldn't fail to notice the dressed-up Zhu and Kong when they went out shopping, arm in arm. They always drew a great deal of attention.

My mother never said anything bad about Kong, who she thought had done a good deed by reforming the errant Zhu. In fact, she often said to me, "Zhu has changed for the better; they're in love and look after each other."

I hesitated and thought to myself: Call this a change for the better? These people are evading reformation!

A Man and His Palate

I had no way of stopping Zhu from evading reformation. He kept away from my restaurant and I couldn't freeze his bank deposits. It was no use criticizing him for having a bourgeois mentality either, since he was nothing but a member of the bourgeoisie. Let him eat, provided he abided by the law, stopped claiming that Suzhou cuisine had deteriorated and didn't storm into my room to voice his complaints. Revolution didn't happen overnight.

He never came again, and even when we met by chance he would ignore me and sweep past, displaying his re-emerging paunch like a victorious rooster.

What really got me was how so many other people had the

瘪老阿飞!"

我的妈妈从来不说孔碧霞的坏话，她认为这个女人是行了件好事，使得一个败子回头。她买菜回来常常对我说："又碰到朱经理啦，现在变好了，夫妻两个亲亲热热，像个过日子的。"

我听了只是哼哼，心里想：这叫变好?这是关起门来逃避改造!

六　人之于味

朱自冶逃避改造，我对他也无可奈何。他不到我们的店里来吃饭，我也不能冻结他在银行里的存款；说他有资产阶级的思想也白搭，他本来就是资产阶级。让他去吃吧，革命不是一次完成的，只要他规规矩矩，不再叫喊什么苏州菜不如从前，不再闯到我的房间里来提意见。

朱自冶当然不会提意见罗，偶尔碰到我时也是陌若路人，头也不点，挺着那重新凸起来的肚子扬长而去，像个得胜的公鸡，气得我两肺直扇!

更为气愤的是居然有人和朱自冶唱着一个调子，说我们的饭店是名存实亡，饭菜质量差，花色品种少，服务态度恶劣!而且说这种话的人百分之九十以上都不是资产阶级。有干部，有工人，还有老头老太什么的。我听了很不服，改革才进行了一年多，你们怎么会从赞扬变成反对?两片嘴唇翻得倒快呐!我只好耐心

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same ideas as Zhu and said that our restaurant had lost its reputation, that the service and the quality and variety of our menu had deteriorated. And more than ninety percent of these were not members of the bourgeoisie; they were cadres, workers, old men and women. Within a year, their support had turned to opposition. How quickly they had changed! I patiently explained to one old customer, "Now don't complain, granny, a year ago you wouldn't have been able to come in here."

"All right, now I'm in, and I want good food." She held out some money. "My son sent me this and told me to go out and have something really good when I felt like it. But what do you have here? I could do better than this myself."

"Then cook yourself. Home cooking's always best." A slip of the tongue, I was thinking of Kong.

She was furious. "You sound like the manager of a den of thieves. If I cook myself, what do you do? Get paid for doing nothing?"

Bao butted in, "what do you mean by a den of thieves. Are you calling a socialist enterprise that? Why, you're attacking...."

I quickly stopped him. "Forget it, don't get angry, granny. If you haven't touched your food yet, you can have your money back."

When cadres criticized us I was less polite and would ask them, "Are you here on business, comrade?"

"Yes, I'm form Bejijing," replied one. "I've come spe-

地加以解释：

“老太太，少说两句吧，一年前你能到这里来吃饭，还算见了世面！”

“世面已经见过了，现在要吃好东西！”老太太晃着几张大钞票：“喏，儿子寄来的，他再三关照我要增加营养，高兴的时候便到你们店里来改善改善。改善个屁，还不如我自己烧的！”

“那就自己烧吧，自己烧的东西合口味。”我想起孔碧霞来了，不觉说漏了嘴。

老太太火了：“你……你这话像是开黑店的人说的，我能烧还要你们干什么，白养着你们拿薪水！”

包坤年挺身而出了：“什么叫开黑店，你嘴里放干净点！社会主义的企业是黑店？你侮蔑……”

我连忙拦阻：“好了。算了算了。老太太，你别生气，这菜如果没有动过的话，我们退钱。”

对干部模样的人我就不大客气了：“同志，你是出差的吧？”

“对，咱从北京出差到苏州，听说苏州菜名扬四海，你们的店很有名气，特地来品尝品尝，可你们却拿出这玩艺儿！”

“同志，有这样的玩艺儿已经不错了，你的伙补一天才几毛钱？”

“咱自己就不能补？现在不是包干儿的时代了，咱花得起！”

“艰苦朴素的作风还得保持。”

cially to your restaurant for a taste of the famous Suzhou cuisine, but is this you've got to offer?"

"This is plenty good enough, comrade, what's your daily expense allowance?"

"I'm putting in some of my own money."

"We must keep to our tradition of frugality."

"Yes, yes, thank you for your sermon. If I'd known I would have brought a sack of corn buns with me and then your restaurant wouldn't need to exist." He left in a huff.

I sighed, thinking his bourgeois ideas were too entrenched. As soon as he'd got some money he'd got all high and mighty. Well, it seemed our restaurant had some problems. With the economic development and good harvests in the past couple of years, prices were low while workers and cadres earned good wages. People with money to spend shook their heads at the ordinary food we sold. I wanted to serve ordinary people but they criticized me. Some of them spoke their minds while most, not caring to waste their breath, simply avoided us and went to other restaurants which had only pretended to make reforms. Once the campaign passed, they dropped their pretensions and displayed exquisite dishes in their windows again. They were making people spend money and their business was flourishing. We'd had our day too, at the beginning of the reforms, but we soon went downhill and would be in big trouble if it went on.

Gourmets! When you were poor you would have had these

“对对，谢谢您的教导，早知如此应该背一袋窝头上苏州，你们这家饭店嘛，存在也是多余的！”袖子一甩，走了。

我叹了口气，觉得这人的资产阶级思想也是很严重的，才拿了几天薪金制，就这么财大气粗地当老爷！至于我们这家饭店的存在……唉，确实有了点问题。这两年国民经济大发展，农村连年丰收，工人调资定级，干部拿了薪水……那人民币又特别经花，肉才六毛多一斤，五香茶叶蛋五分钱一个，二两五的洋河大曲连瓶才两毛二分钱。许多人都阔绰起来了，看到大众菜便摇头，认为凡属“大众”都没有好东西，“劳动牌”也不是好香烟。我想为劳动大众服务，劳动大众却对我有意见。有人把意见放在桌面上，更多的人是不愿费口舌，反正有名的菜馆多的是，他们的改革本来就不彻底，临时弄点大众菜装装门面的。时过境迁连门面也不装了，橱窗里琳琅满目，各种名菜赫然在焉！他们乘着市面繁荣时拼命地掏人家的口袋，掏得人家笑嘻嘻地，那营业额像在寒暑表上哈热气，红线呼呼地升上去！我们也曾有过黄金时代啊！想那改革之初，营业额也曾一度上升，我还以此教育过管账的，说他是杞人忧天。隔了不久便往下降，降，降……降掉了三分之一，再降下去确实会产生能否存在的危机！

好吃的人们啊！当你们贫困的时候恨不得要砸掉高级饭店，有了几个钱之后又忙不迭地向里挤，只愁挤不进，只恨不高级。如果广寒仙

classy resturants torn down, but as you get a little money you all pile in, worried you won't get a seat, and you want high-class meals too.

The spring of 1957 was a troubled time. The restaurant employees began to write big-character posters saying what they thought of me and hung them in the corridor. Their objections to the food and the drop in business didn't upset me, but one signed "our employee" accusing me of seeking personal glory at the expense of the restaurant and its employees made me furious. The adjectives used in the poster and its tone meant it could only have been written by that scoundrel Bao! Of course I had to accept all the criticisms even if they had only the minutest grain of truth in them.

Just while I was so troubled and bewilidered by all that was happening, my old scchoolmate Bighead Ding, on his way to a conference in Beijing, stopped off in Suzhou to see me. It was eight years since we'd met and I was overjoyed. "You must come out to dinner, we can go to our restaurant," I said, a little surprised at myself wanting to take people out to dinner as soon as I saw them. It wasn't like me.

He shook his head. "Thanks, but I've been there and I've read the posters. Tell me what you have been doing all these years."

"What have I been doing? Well, just hold on a bit and I'll tell you all about it." I called my wife in and introduced Ding to her. "This is the Bighead Ding I've talked about so

子真的开了“月宫饭店”，你们大概也会千方百计地搭云梯！

一九五七年的春天是个骚动不安的季节，到处都在鸣放，还有闹事的。店里的职工开始贴我的大字报了，废报纸上写黑字，飘飘荡荡地挂在走廊里。我看了以后倒也沉得住气，无非是大众菜和营业额等等的问题。只有一张大字报令人气愤，说我是拿饭店的名声，拿职工的血汗来换取个人的名利，说那杨中宝是被我打击、排挤出去的！署名是“一职工”，可从那语气和那么多的形容词来看，肯定是包坤年写的。你这小子也太不应该了，当初改革时你也曾热情支持，说杨中宝开地下饭店也是你汇报的，怎么能把一堆屎都甩到我的头上来呢！当然，我也没有必要对此加以解释，只要有千分之一的正确性，都是应该接受的。

正当我惶惑不安，心情烦躁的时候，却来了我的老同学丁大头！

丁大头到北京开会，路过苏州，特地下车来看看我。转眼八年啦，真叫人想念！我情不自禁地叫起来：“老伙计，我要好好地请你吃一顿，走，上我们的饭店去！”我叫过以后也觉得奇怪，这话可不像我说的，怎么见了面就想请客呢！

丁大头摇摇头：“罢啦，你们的饭店我已经领教过了，还把大字报浏览了一遍。老伙计，你这些年都干了些什么呢？”

“干了点什么？等等，你等等。等会儿我会

much. Ding, this is my wife."

Ding bowed. "I'm Ding Zhen, Bighead was my nickname....But don't tell anybody else I'm a manager just like you."

My wife smiled, scrutinizing his head as if trying to determine whether or not it was really bigger than average.

"Don't stand there gaping! Why don't you go and buy some food?" Ding had already been to my restaurant and I didn't want to become a laughing stock by taking him to another one. I'd better ask my wife to make something at home.

During the two years we'd been married my wife hadn't cooked very much. All she could do was give him tea and cigarettes and say, "You two chat for a while. Mother has gone to a neighbourhood committee meeting. She'll get you something when she comes home."

The neighbourhood meetings were always marathons. The food market would be closed by the time she finished. "Why don't you cook something today? You can't depend on mother all the time."

"Have you forgotten?" she retorted. "You always say young people mustn't spend time on cooking if they want to get ahead. This ambitious young woman doesn't know where the oil is."

Ding burst out laughing. "I'll bet that's exactly what he said, so let him take the consequences."

"All right, then go and tell mother we have a guest and

全部告诉你。"我连忙把我的爱人叫出来，向丁大头介绍："喏，这就是我的爱人。这就是我常常对你说起的丁大头。"

丁大头欠了欠身子："丁正，绰号大头……哎哎，这个雅号再也不能扩散了，我和你一样，大小也是个经理！"

我爱人掩着嘴笑，盯住丁大头看，好像要弄清楚那头是否比平常人大点。

我说："你别呆看了，快到小菜场去看看，买点儿什么东西。"丁大头对我们的饭店已经领教过了，带他到人家的饭店里去更是制造口舌。所以我想叫爱人随便弄点菜，晚上就在家里吃一点。

谁知道我的爱人没手抓了，结婚两年多她还没有弄过饭哩！她只会替丁大头倒茶、递烟。说："你们先谈会儿吧，妈妈到居民委员会开会去了，等她回来再替你们准备吃的。"

我一听便急了，居民委员会开会是个马拉松，又拉又松，等到他们开完会，那小菜场肯定已经关门扫地。便说："你就烧一顿吧，不能样样事情都依赖妈妈。"

我爱人来话了："怎么，你把说过的话都忘啦，你说年轻人如果把业余时间都花在小炉子上，肯定不会有出息。"她把双手一摊："你看，我这个有出息的人还不知道油瓶在哪里！"

丁大头哈哈地笑起来了："对，我可以证明，这话肯定是他说的，一切后果由他负责！"

我连忙摆摆手："好了，你到居民委员会去一趟，就说家里来了人，让妈妈早点儿拔签。"

ask her to come back."

After she went out I began to unburden myself, starting right at the beginning. "You've read those posters. One of them was a personal attack by a young man. The rest were about my work. Where have I gone wrong in these reforms? You know what it was like in the old days. I have been working to eliminate that kind of wrong. Now those posters are attacking me for doing just that. But I haven't done anything wrong."

Ding fell silent, inhaling deeply on his cigarette. He was probably very troubled too.

"Well, say something! You're well read, you've been working in a bookstore all these years. Pick up a book and give me a thump on the head. You'd better choose a hard-cover one and give me a really good whack."

Ding laughed. "That's no good, it'll spill your brains out. I would, however, like to draw your attention to a strange physiological phenemenon. It seems that the palate of the bourgeoisie is similar to that of the proletariat. The capitalists prefer shrimps to shredded meat and cabbage, and once they've tasted them, so do the proletariat. So when they've got the money they order shrimps, but you keep pushing shredded meat and cabbage at them. I'm surprised they haven't come after you with a hammer!"

I blew up. "You can't live on shrimps."

"Of course you can't; who can afford to do that?" he retorted.

爱人出去之后，我便滔滔不绝地倒苦水，从头说到尾："……那些大字报你都浏览过了，进行人身攻击的不谈，那是一个年轻人跟着人家起哄的。可是我的改革有什么错?旧社会的情景你也见过的，就是为了消灭那种不平才去战斗。我不会忘记，临离开这个城市的时候我曾经对她发过誓言。当然，那只是一种壮志，个人的力量是很微薄的，可是在我力所能及的范围内决不能让那些污泥浊水再从阴沟里冒出来，决不能让那些人还生活在他们的天堂里！他们可以关起门来逃避，但是不能让我们的同志在吃的方面去向资产阶级学习。当年我们遥望江南，为的是向旧世界冲击；曾几何时，那些飘飘荡荡的大字报却对着我冲击了！冲吧，我问心无愧！"

丁大头沉默了，直抽烟，他的心情大概也是很不平静的。

"说话呀，你的知识比我广博，这些年又在新华书店工作，整天埋在书堆里，你可以随便抽出一本书来敲敲我的头，最好是那些布面烫金的，敲起来有力！"

丁大头笑了："那不行，敲破了头是很难收拾的，我只是想告诉你一个奇怪的生理现象，那资产阶级的味觉和无产阶级的味觉竟然毫无区别！资本家说清炒虾仁比白菜炒肉丝好吃，无产阶级尝了一口之后也跟着点头。他们有了钱以后，也想吃清炒虾仁了，可你却硬要把白菜炒肉丝塞在人家的嘴里，没有请你吃榔头总算是客气的！"

"But we get so many people, you mustn't underestimate bad tendencies, comrade."

"It's you who've underestimated them. They've got money now. If one out of a hundred wants shrimps, that's enough to fill your restaurant to bursting. You keep rattling on about liberating the working people, but then you think they're not up to your expectations. People want to eat shrimp now and again and are quite happy to let you make a little profit, but this grates on you."

"It certainly does not! I don't have anything against them."

"I know you don't like that Zhu character, but what can you do about him when he shuts himself away?"

"He doesn't hide himself away entirely."

"Of course, a lot of people other than the working masses will be eating shrimp. I'll tell you: even when the landlords and capitalists have been eliminated, you'll still have hooligans and thieves among your customers, even escaped murderers."

I believed him. You needed an official letter and an ID card to get a room in a hotel, but only money to go to a restaurant. "You're right," I sighed. "But I still think frugality is one of our national virtues. Why should we place so much emphasis on food?"

"I know, and from your personal point of view it's a fine thing. I hope you'll keep on being frugal. But you're a restaruant manager and you can't bring all your personal

我跳起来了："你你，……你也不能天天吃清炒虾仁呀！"

"谁天天到饭店里吃炒虾仁的，他有那么多的工资吗？"

"可也不少呀，同志，你不能低估这种潮流！"

"是你把大众低估了。大众是个无穷大，一百个人中如果有一个来炒虾仁，就会挤破你那饭店的大门！你老是叨念着要解放劳苦大众，可又觉得这解放出来的大众不如你的心意。人家偶尔向你要一盆炒虾仁，不白吃，还乐意让你赚点，可你却像砂子丢在眼睛里。"

"不不，我对大众没意见。"

"我知道，你是对那个朱什么冶有意见，他闭门不出了，你到哪里去揪他呢！"

"也不是全躲在家里。"

"当然，肯定会有许多人跟着劳动大众去吃虾仁。告诉你吧，即使将来地主和资本家都不存在了，你那吃客之中还会有流氓与小偷，还有杀人在逃的，信不信由你。"

我信了。我早就发觉过这一点，住旅馆需要工作证和介绍信，吃饭只要有钱便可以。我只好叹气了："唉，你的话也不无道理，可我总觉得勤俭朴素是我们民族的美德，何必在吃的方面那么顶真呢？"

"说得对，这对你个人来说是一种美德，希望你能保持下去。可你是个饭店的经理，不能把个人的好恶带到工作里。苏州的吃太有名了，是千百年来劳动人民创造出来的文化，如

feelings into your work. Suzhou cuisine is famous; it's something created by the labouring people over a long period of time. If you destroy it history will hold you responsible."

I went cold. My schooling had taught me the importance of history. I would get nowhere if I resisted historical trends. Anyway I doubted that this cuisine was something created by labourers; it was obviously invented by people like Zhu and Kong.

On top of that, my mother shouldn't have given us such a lavish supper, five dishes and a delicious soup.

Ding was all smile. "Look, this trend is sneaking into your home! You'd better watch out!"

Pumpkins and the Like

After Ding left, I did some careful thinking. Why did I want to get good food when an old friend turned up? Most simply, it was because I enjoyed doing it as well as showing my respect for a friend. Why didn't I do it before? When I said goodbye to him at Wuhan eight years ago I'd given him a send-off with a bowl of dumplings that cost five *fen*. He was happy and I demonstrated my affection. Why couldn't I do that instead of spending five yuan on food? Because five *fen* was a tenth of all the money I had then. Now, with my increased income, five yuan was the equivalent of five *fen* in those days. Even if Ding wouldn't have minded a bowl of dumplings, my mother and wife would have scolded me for

果把这种文化毁在你手里，你是要对历史负责的！”

我一听便凉了。我在学校里读过历史，知道那玩艺可不是好惹的，万一被它钉住了，死都逃不脱的！可我也怀疑，这吃的艺术怎么会是劳动人民创造的呢，说得好听罢了，这发明权分明是属于朱自冶和孔碧霞他们的。

也怪我的妈妈太热情，这天的晚饭竟然是五菜一汤，汤是用活鲫鱼烧的，味道鲜美。

丁大头眉开眼笑了："你看，这社会风气已经渗透到你的家庭中来了，注意！”

七　南瓜之类

丁大头走后，我仔细地检查了我的行为。一个老朋友来了，为什么立即想到要去买菜呢？很简单，这是一种乐趣，也含有尊重与慰劳的意味。过去为什么不是这样的呢？记得渡江后和他在无锡分手时，我也曾为他送行，花了五分钱在摊头上吃了一碗小馄饨，他十分满意，我也情意绵绵。今天为什么不能那样做，一顿花掉五块多钱！也很简单，那时的五分钱是我全部流动资金的十分之一，而我今天的工资是七十五，加上我爱人的工资，再扣去家庭的开支，那五块钱也就等于五分钱。物质和精神的砝码一样大，情谊的天平是平平的。如果我今天还请丁大头吃小馄饨，即使他不介意，我又有什么必要让他忆苦思甜！如果让妈妈和爱人知道的话，肯定要把我一顿臭骂："这些年你

being stingy. "You've missed Ding all these years, yet when he comes you won't spend more than five *fen*. What kind of person is that?"

Well, I had to be somebody who was consistent and don't just follow bad tendencies. But had I noticed time passing, and life changing? To forget the past was a betrayal, yet refusal to change was also a betrayal, for it ran counter to the wishes of the pople. Well, I'd forget about Zhu and let him have a good time in his cosy nest.

Just as I was about to accept these new ideas, the anti-Rightist movement started. It didn't hurt me; in fact I was almost a hero. People said I had a firm standpoint and had proved through my actions that the capitalists had been wrong in claiming that "the present was worse than the past". Still I wasn't really active enough since I had a change of heart after Ding's visit. I missed a chance of promotion.

The movement was followed by the Big Leap Forward and people were too busy to care about food that much. After that came the three years of natural disasters when people had nothing to eat. Ordinary food was a luxury; anything edible was welcome. No one particularly cared about the taste.

It was a bad time for Zhu. He'd spent his whole life satisfying his palate rather than his stomach. Delicious tastes came from delicate foods like vegetable hearts, fish tails, egg whites, lean meat, mushrooms and ham. During the years

一直惦记个丁大头，来了以后只肯花五分钱，你还像不像个人呢！”

我当然像个人，而且自以为像个很好的人，不随波逐流，不见异思迁……可我有没有感到时间在流去，生活在变迁？我只知道忘记了过去就等于背叛，却不知道忘记了变化也和背叛是差不多的，同样是违反了人民的心意。不去管什么朱自冶了，让他在小庭院里快活几天！

正当我想转弯的时候，反右斗争开始了。这个运动没有碰到我，差点儿还成了英雄哩。谁都承认我立场坚定，方向对头，早就以实际行动打击了资产阶级的“今不如昔”。只是由于我的心中有鬼，说话吞吞吐吐，行动也不积极，白白错过了一个提拔的机会，是个扶不起的刘阿斗。

我想转弯也来不及了，因此跟着便是大跃进，大跃进之后便是困难年。大跃进的时候人人都顾不上吃饭，困难年人人都想吃饭了，却又没有什么东西可吃的；酱油都要计划供应了，谁还会对大众菜有意见？连菜汤都是一抢而空，尽管那菜汤是少放油，多放盐。凡是能吃的东西人们都能下肚，还管它什么滋味不滋味！

这就苦了朱自冶啦！他吃了四十多年的饭，从来就不是为了填饱肚皮，而是为了“吃点味道”。这味道可是由食物的精华聚集而成的。吃菜要吃心，吃鱼要吃尾，吃蛋不吃黄，吃

when these were scarce even a good cook like Kong couldn't produce a tasty dish.

People are strange creatures. When there's food about their taste buds are highly sensitive; salty, delicate, savoury, sweet, hot, all can be differentiated. When there's nothing to eat, hunger takes over and three large bowls of plain rice give one an indescribable contentment and satisfaction. Zhu wasn't exempt from this law either. Hunger drove him out of his nest to roam about, not for delicacies this time but to see if there were crowds of people anywhere. He'd race over and squeeze in, try to buy sweet potatoes, turnips or peanuts at any price. More ofter than not, he would go home past my door empty-handed, exhausted and despondent. For the first time I saw him drop his airs; for the first time he realized that money wasn't omnipotent. He felt that he was given less rice than Kong's daughter.

"You're seeing things," Kong snapped.

"Is it me or you? My bowl is practically empty."

Kong shoved her daughter's bowl at him. "Here, take this one too; she's not your daughter anyway."

The child sobbed while husband and wife had a terrible row. After that they ate separately, with Zhu cooking his own meals. No longer were they seen arm in arm, nor did people hear her coquettishly calling him.

I was hungry too. As a restaurant manager, there were ways I could get food. In times like this, power was more effective than money. But I never cheated and would rather

肉不吃肥，还少不了蘑菇与火腿。当这一切都消失了的时候，任凭那孔碧霞有天大的本领也难以为炊。

人也真是个奇怪的动物，有得吃的时候味觉特别灵敏，咸、淡、香、甜、嫩、老，点点都能区别。没得吃的时候那饿觉便上升到第一位，饿急了能有三大碗米饭（不需要上白米）向肚子里一填，那愉快和满足的感觉也是难以形容的。朱自冶尽管吃了一世的味道，却也难逃此种规律。他被饥饿从小庭院中逼出来了，又拎着个草包成天在街上兜。这一次不是寻找美味了，只要看见那里围着人，便拼命地向里钻，企图能买到一点红薯、萝卜或花生米之类，不管什么价钱。无奈，他经常总是提着个空包回来，神情沮丧，疲惫不堪地走过我家的门前。我第一次见到他财大并不气粗，他也许是第一次感到金钱并不是万能的。照理说那朱自冶也饿不了，城市不比农村，他有定量供应。大跃进之前他家的定量吃不了，经常向外调剂，现在虽说捐献掉两斤，那也不至于饿肚皮。奇怪，一旦缺少了副食品和油之后，那粮食就好像是棉花做的，一天八两一顿下肚，还不知道是塞在哪个角落里！何况那思想也有问题，一顿不饱十顿饥，眼睛一睁便想吃东西。朱自冶以前是眼睛一睁便想吃头汤面，现在却老是睁着眼睛看住桌上的饭碗，总觉得他碗里的饭要比孔碧霞女儿少了点。孔碧霞也没好气：

“是你的肚子里有鬼！”

have died of hunger than lose my integrity. Besides, I didn't starve. Both the women in my family took good care of their charge. My mother would always urge me, "You eat first, you've got to go to work and I'm staying home. I'll eat later." I knew what "later" meant, so I stealthily put some rice back in the pot. My wife made sure that our daughter had enough to eat. She was at primary school and growing, and wanted to eat as soon as she got home from school. She'd eat as much as she was given, not like children today who have to be coaxed into eating.

My wife had never been all that strong and fell ill, her legs and face swelling up. This was a common illness in those days and could easily be cured with a chunk of pork and a chicken cooked with four ounces of rock sugar, but there was nowhere to get these.

With a heavy heart I was dragging my way past A'er's door one day when he signalled to me.

When he was dredging the river he'd proved himself a very good member of the working class by working hard and not grumbling about being paid only three catties of rice a day. The leader had a high opinion of him and transferred him to a transportation unit where he'd become chairman of their trade union. He still trusted me and listened to every word I said. Hadn't history proved that the rickshaw had been consigned to museums and that pedicabs were hardly seen? Although he hadn't become a driver, he had become the drivers' boss.

“我有鬼还是你有鬼？一个是空的，一个是实的！”

孔碧霞一把夺过女儿的饭碗：“给你，都给你，反正女儿也不是你养的！”

孩子哇地一声哭起来了，夫妻俩吵得不可开交。吵到后来实行分食制，一只煤炉两只锅，各烧各的。在吃上凑合起来的人，终于因吃而分成两边。再也看不见他们两个套着膀子走路了，再也听不见孔碧霞嗲声嗲气地叫喊：“老朱嗳，你来嘘!”

资产阶级的家庭关系本来就是建筑在金钱上的，当金钱处于半失效的状态时，那关系也就会处于半破裂。我倒有点为朱自冶庆幸了，这下子他可以不再迷信金钱，也可以知道一粥一饭的来之不易，不要那么无休止地去寻求美味。

我这样想并不是幸灾乐祸，因为我和朱自冶同处于一个灾祸之中，他饿我也饿，同样地饿得难受。按说，我是一个饭店的经理，在吃的方面还是有点儿办法的，在这种特定的时刻，权力的作用会明显地超过金钱。可我一贯自认为是个很好的人，饿死事小，失节事大，不去搞那些鬼把戏。老实说，也没有饿到真的爬不起来的地步。况且我的家庭很巩固，妈妈和我的爱人拚命地保证重点。妈妈总是让我先吃：“快吃吧，吃了上班去，我反正没事，等一歇。”我知道这“等一歇”是什么意思，总是偷偷地把饭拨掉点。我的爱人重点保证女儿，孩子读小学，正在长身体，放学回家等不及放书包，便喊肚子

I went into his place. His father was in the courtyard. After ignoring me for a couple of years, he'd started to ask me to have a drink with him after A'er began to earn a monthly wage, got married and got his two younger brothers working too. Where the stall selling ginger and onions had been there was now a small table where he would sip a little wine every evening. But since things were taking a turn for the worse once again he'd taken his table inside. I still called him uncle, a greeting he acknowledged unsmilingly.

A'er took me aside. "How is you wife? She looked pretty bad when I saw her the other day."

"Yes, she's got dropsy."

"We sent two trucks to Zhejiang to get some bamboo but they came back with two loads of pumpkins instead. Bring a cart to the dock before dawn tomorrow and I'll give you some."

"You shouldn't do that! They're for the people in your organization; I can't take any."

"I'm not up to anything bad, I'm giving you my share. We often send trucks out to get food; I'm much better off than you."

"But...."

"No more buts, do as he says," the old man cut in. "What's so special about pumpkins? I'm waiting for those big state farms and tractors and some of your vodka," he chided.

I laughed. "Don't give me a hard time, uncle. Remember

饿，不管给她多少，她都会呼呼啦啦地吃下去，哪像现在的孩子，吃饭都要大人逼！

我爱人的身体本来就不好，不久便发现腿也肿了，脸也泡了。这是当时的一种流行病，谁都会医，药方也很简单：一只蹄膀、一只鸡，加四两冰糖煎服便可以，到哪里去找呢！

我有点心事重重了，走路也闷着头。走过阿二家门前时，他在门内向我招手。

阿二早已不挖河道了。当年以工代赈时，每天只拿三斤米，他积极工作，毫无怨言，不愧为工人阶级。领导上十分器重他，安排他到搬运站去工作，现在是基层工会的主席。他对我很信任，总以为我说的话都是对的。可不，那黄包车已经进了博物馆，三轮车也不多见，他虽然没有当上司机，却也是司机的领导哩。

我进了阿二家的门，见阿二的爸爸也坐在天井里。这老头儿有好几年对我不予理睬，后来儿子当了干部，定了工资，讨了媳妇，阿三、阿四也都就了业。老头儿也不卖葱姜了，在那摆摊头的地方摆张小桌子，天天晚上弄点老酒抿抿，看见我总是笑嘻嘻地打招呼："来来，弄一杯！"如今的日子又不大好过了，小桌子又搬到了天井里。我喊他一声老伯伯，他想笑却没有张开嘴。

阿二把我拉到一边："怎么样，我看见阿嫂的脸色有点不对！"

"是啊，有点浮肿。"

"这样吧，我们有两辆汽车到浙江去拉毛

how you used to ignore me when A'er was dredging the river? Then later you invited me for a drink every time you saw me. Don't be too impatient. These hard times are only temporary. The good times will come back."

He nodded and laughed. "I know, I know."

People like him who'd suffered in the old society and had a better life in the fifties never lost heart during those difficult years; they knew that retrogression only meant destruction and that hope lay ahead. They therefore patiently put up with hardships and waited for the good time to come back, though the waiting was long. I regretted that I hadn't given my customers more shrimps to increase their confidence in the future.

My mother was overjoyed and set off immediately to borrow a cart. The cart brought Zhu Ziye in its wake. He looked wary and pitiful. He wouldn't take a seat and just stood at the door looking foolish. I wondered if he had come to complain about something again.

My mother, as respectful to him as ever, made him sit down and gave him a cup of tea. "Say what you have to say, Mr Zhu. Did you have a row with your wife?"

"I haven't got that much energy! Look at me, I'm all skin and bones," he sighed, patting his sunken stomach which had protruded twice before, a barometer of his existence.

That paunch gone and his ruddy face sunken, he looked haggard and older. "Have patience, Mr Zhu. Hard times temper you," I said.

竹，毛竹没有拉到，却在哪个山沟里弄来两车南瓜。你准备一辆小板车，天不亮便到码头上去，我弄一车给你。”

“不不，我又不是你们单位里的人，怎么好分你们的东西，再说……”

“别说啦，我决不会做那种‘狗皮捣灶’的事情，那南瓜有我一份，你先拉去吃。我们经常有车子在外面跑，总比你活络点。”

“那……”

“那什么呀，去拉吧！”老头儿在旁边插话了：“南瓜有什么稀奇，大农场，拖拉机，我还等着喝你的伏特加哩！”老头儿咧开嘴笑了，他是在挖苦我的。

我也笑了：“老伯伯，你别挖苦我，我还没有翻你的老底呢。那时候阿二去挖河泥，你看我连头也不点。后来怎么样啦，天天喊我弄一杯。别着急，目前是暂时的困难，好日子会回来的！”

老头儿真心地笑了，连连点头：“对对，我相信，相信。”

千千万万个像阿二爸爸这样的人，所以在困难中没有对新中国失去信心，就是因为他们经历过旧社会，经历过五十年代那些康乐的年头。他们知道退是绝路，而进总是有希望的。他们所以能在当时和以后的艰难困苦中忍耐着，等待着，就是相信那样的日子会回头，尽管等待的时间太长了一点。我很后悔，如果当年能为他们多炒几盘虾仁，加深他们对于美好的记忆，那，信心可能会更足点！

"Right, you're right." He rose hesitantly and then sat down again. Mother had gone through hardships herself and knew that Zhu had a favour to ask. Before Liberation, when she had to borrow money from Zhu, she'd gone in and out many times before she could bring herself to ask. Not wanting other people to suffer the way she did, she prompted him.

"Tell us what's on your mind; maybe we can help. Everybody has difficulties in their life."

"Pumpkins. I hear you're getting some pumpkins, can I buy some from you?"

This was a surprise. As the pumpkins were supposed to build up my wife's health, my mother was at a loss, remembering old stories of loyal servants helping their masters in distress. She turned to me. "What do you say, Xiaoting?"

The Zhu Ziye who had perched arrogantly on A'er's rickshaw and who'd dined in all manner of eating places was pitifully begging for a few pumpkins. This was enough punishment for him.

I nodded. "You can have some."

"Thank you very much, I'll pay you." He shoved his hand into his pocket, never forgetting the power of money.

He'd managed to hit the wrong note. Disgusted, I said, "I don't want money, but I do have a condition."

"What is it?" He looked worried.

"You must come along and help me cart the pumpkins. Those who don't work don't eat. You wouldn't want me to

我回家把这件事情告诉了妈妈，妈妈谢天谢地，连忙四处奔走，去借小板车。

小板车借回来了，可那朱自冶却像幽灵似的跟着小板车到了我的家里！他的样子很拘谨，也很可怜。叫他坐也不坐，痴痴呆呆地站在门角落里。我暗自稀奇，现在来找我干什么，难道还对大众菜有意见！

妈妈对朱自冶一直很尊敬，硬拉朱自冶坐下，还替他倒了杯水：

"朱先生，有什么话你就说吧，是不是又和孔碧霞吵架啦！"

"哪有力气吵啊，你们看，瘦的！"朱自冶叹了口气，拍拍他那曾经两度凸出来的肚子，他那肚子是生活的晴雨表。

是呀，朱自冶那个颇有气派的肚子又瘪下去了，红油油的大脸盘也缩起来了，胖子瘦了特别惹眼，人变得像个没有装满的口袋，松松拉拉地全是皮。我说："忍耐一下吧朱先生，这对你也是一种磨炼！"

"啊……也对，也对。"朱自冶迟疑着，想站起来，又坐下去。

妈妈是个饱经沧桑的人，她从朱自冶的神态上就已经看出，这是一种有求于人而又难以启口的表现。她在解放前被逼得无路可走时，也曾向朱自冶借过钱。她曾经对我说过，向人借钱的日子最不好过。失魂落魄地跑进门，开不出口来又跑出去，低声下气地不知道要兜几个圈子。她大概是不想让自己受过的罪再让别人受，便替朱自冶壮胆：

deliver them to your house, would you?"

"Of course not, I'll work. But... I don't know how to pull a cart. I might overturn it into the river."

He was right. "You can push while I pull," I said.

"Fine, I'll do my best."

"Good, come to the corner store at four tomorow morning. Make sure to be there on time." A labourer must have discipline, I thought.

At 3:55 the following morning, I pulled the noisy cart through a slumbering lane.

Zhu, wrapped tightly in a raincoat, had planted himself conspicuously beneath a streetlamp. I was pleased. Manual labour could reform people; at least he'd learned to be on time.

"Good morning, Mr Zhu, I'm sorry to have kept you waiting."

"I've smoked five cigarettes already." He took off his raincoat and bent down to push the cart.

I quickly urged him to put his coat on and told him that an empty cart didn't need pushing. And I showed him how to raise the handle a little. "See? When the front is higher, the centre of gravity is at the back and you can pull the cart without too much effort. When we've loaded it, all you need to do is give me a hand when we go up and down slopes and bridges. When we're on level ground, just put one arm on the cart, press your weight down and run along beside it."

Zhu heaved a sigh of relief. So pushing carts wasn't that

“朱先生，有什么话就说吧，说出来也好让我们帮助。人生一世，谁还没有个为难之处！”

“南瓜。”朱自冶没头没脑地开了口：“听说你家去拉南瓜，能不能分点给我，我……给钱。”

妈妈虽然知道朱自冶决不是来借钱的，却没料到他是来讨南瓜，这事儿她不好作主，因为南瓜和我爱人的浮肿病有点关系，万一有个三长两短，那就说不过去。不答应朱自冶吧，她也觉得说不过去，因为她知道许多公子落难，义仆救主的故事，只好抬起头来看看我：“小庭，你看呐！”

用不着看了，朱自冶那可怜巴巴的样子就在眼前。从他趾高气扬地高踞在阿二的黄包车上，大摇大摆地出入茶馆酒肆，直到今天抖抖缩缩地向人家讨几只南瓜，天意的惩罚也是够受的啦！

我点了点头：“好，分点给你。”

朱自冶双手一合：“谢谢，谢谢，我给钱！”说着便把手伸进口袋，他并没有忘记钱的魔力。

我突然产生了反感：“不要钱，你要答应我一个条件！”

“什么条件?”朱自冶又惶了。

“跟我一起去拉板车。不劳动者不得食，总不能再叫人把南瓜送到你家里！”

“当然当然，我一定劳动！可……可我不会拉板车，弄不好会把车子拉到河里。”

hard! He walked along bedside me, his raincoat over his arm, looking around animatedly as if seeing the city and the street cleaners for the first time.

"What time is it, Manager Gao? It feels like midnight to me."

"Three minutes past four. Haven't you got a watch?" I wondered why he had measured the time by the number of cigarettes he had smoked.

"I had a Longines watch in my first year at university but I only wore it for three days. I didn't like having it on my wrist."

I almost burst out laughing. That Longines watch must be in his stomach now. That was the best place for it.

"How did you get to class on time then?"

"I didn't go. It was a private university where you could buy diplomas. I regret that I didn't study hard now. There're still so many new words when I read a book."

I looked at him in a new light. If he didn't push carts, at least he read. And reading was educational.

"What do you read?"

"Books about food, of course. Cookbooks. Now that food is scarce, I lie in bed at night remembering the goodies I had before and then all those exquisitely decorated dishes seem to appear right before my eyes. To tell you the truth, my memory is particularly good where food is concerned. I can remember what I had dozens of years ago from a certain chef in a particular restaurant. How it tasted and what the af-

我一想，这倒也是个实际问题："你总会推吧，我在前面拉，你在后面推。"

"会，我一定用力推。"

"那好，明天早晨四点钟，你在巷头上烟纸店的门口等我，过时不候！"我给他把时间定死了，劳动者总要守点儿劳动纪律。

第二天早晨三点五十五分，我把小板车拉出了大门，在空寂的小巷里咭嘟咭嘟地向前滚。

果然不错，朱自冶站在那里哩。我本来的意思是叫他站在烟纸店的屋檐下，那里可以避一避深秋黎明时的寒露。可他却紧紧地裹着一件旧雨衣，像个电线木杆似的站在路灯的下面，为的是能让我一眼便看见。我看了很高兴，劳动是能改造人的，起码叫他懂得了准时准点。

"早啊，朱先生，叫你久等了吧。"

"可不是，我已经抽掉了五根香烟！"朱自冶说着便脱雨衣，弯下身来帮我推。

我连忙说："穿上，空车是用不着推的。"我存心要教会朱自冶一点儿劳动的本领，便把车杠向上一提："你看，只要前高后低，重心在后，它自己会向前滚的，费不了多少力。等会儿装了南瓜，也只要你在上坡下桥时帮我一把。到了平地，你只要一手搭住车帮，弯腰向前，把体重压到车帮上，跟着跑跑便可以。"

朱自冶嘘了口气，原来这推车也不费力！他把雨衣向手弯里一搭，甩打甩打地走在我的身边。朱自冶东张西望，兴致勃勃，好像是第一

英汉对照
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tertaste was like. Don't you laugh. The aftertaste is important. Green olives are neither salty nor sweet nor crispy but they have a savoury aftertaste. Human beings are highly intelligent in creating so many good foods. They eat creatures that fly in the sky, that live on the land and in the seas and rivers. Otherwise they wouldn't exist today. Dinosaurs ate only grass. Where are they now? ... Don't sigh. It's a pity that I didn't keep a detailed diary of all the good food I've eaten. So I read cookbooks to satisfy my craving. Slow down a bit and listen to me. I sometimes get angry with those cookbooks which are too general and don't include my favourite foods. What gets me is that they don't give any space to Suzhou cuisine but to queer things that the emperors used to eat. The hundred dishes they had every day were only for show; how many of them were good? Why did Emperor Qianlong come to the south three times? For Suzhou food of course...."

I'd had enough. "Hurry up, let's go get the pumpkins." I stressed the word pumpkins to bring him back to reality.

"Right, we shouldn't overlook pumpkins; they can be made into someting superb too. Your restaurant used to have a famous dish called 'watermelon bowl", or also 'watermelon chicken'. You cut the top off a medium-sized melon, take out the inside, leaving about one inch of flesh, and carve designs on the rind. Then you fill it with a well-steamed young chicken, replace the lid and steam it a minute. Serve the melon on a lotus leaf, which gives a cool

次看到这黎明前的苏州，第一次看到清洁工人在路灯下扫地，第一次听到那粪车在巷子里辚辚地滚过去。

“高经理，现在几点啦，我怎么觉得还是在半夜里。”

“四点零三分。怎么，你没有表吗?”我有点奇怪了，朱自冶的时间怎么是用抽几支香烟来计算的?

“不瞒你说，读大学的那一年家里给了我一只浪琴金表，我戴了三天就不想要了，总觉得手腕上多了个东西，很不舒服。”

我差点儿笑出来了，那只浪琴金表大概早已下肚，放在肚子里是最舒服不过的。

“那你不要准时上课吗，迟到了也是很不舒服的。”

“迟到，嘿嘿，我根本就不到。野鸡大学，文凭也可以卖的。唉，书到用时方恨少呀，现在想看点儿书了，还有许多字不识呢!”

我对朱自冶刮目相看了，不会拉板车也罢，能看点儿书总是好的，开卷有益。

“都看点儿什么书呢?”

“喏，当然是关于吃的，食谱。这些时没有什么吃的了，晚上睡不着，想起自己一生吃过的好东西，好像那些大盘小碗，花花绿绿的菜肴就在眼前。不瞒你说，我在这方面的记忆力特别好，我能记得几十年前吃过的名菜，在什么地方吃的，是哪个厨师烧的，进口是什么味道，余味又是怎么样的……你别笑，吃东西是要讲究余味的，青橄榄有什么吃头;不甜不咸，不酥不脆，就是因为吃了之后嘴里有一股清

green effect." After memorizing the recipe, Zhu shook his head. "Actually the chicken doesn't taste like melon and the sweet melon doesn't go with the salted chicken either, it's just to give it a pleasant cool greenness. We could invent a pumpkin bowl and fill it with steamed glutinous rice, nuts and preserved fruit. Sweet pumpkin would be just the thing for glutinous rice pudding; it would have a country flavour."

His long recital about food brought us almost to the dock. I didn't interrupt him, having no confidence in his transformation any more. People don't change their basic natures.

Landing in the Same Boat

It was beyond my wildest notions that an opponent of gluttony and a glutton would stand side by side one day. Yet in the "cultural revolution" I was labelleed a capitalist roader while Zhu was called a bloodsucker. Every morning we stood in front of the neighbourhood committee with placards round our necks confessing our "crimes".

There was reason to call Zhu a "blood-sucking vampire". But I... maybe I was a capitalist roader. Once the years of natural disasters were over, I'd wanted to make amends for the reformation I'd carried out earlier and didn't force cabbage and shredded meat on the customers any more. Since times were changing, the higher-ups issued an order to open better restaurants selling costlier dishes in order to take a bit of currency out of circulation. It was incumbent upon famous

香，取其余味。人真是万物之灵啊，居然能做出那么多好吃的东西！从天上吃到地下，从河里吃到海里。人要不是会钻天打洞地去吃的话，就不会存在到今天！恐龙只会吃草，那么巨大的东西如今又在哪里？……你别叹气。是的，我也觉得很可惜，当年吃过了也就算了，没有写日记，现在回想起来就不那么全面，所以想看食谱，复习复习，还可以熬馋呢！……哎哎，你慢点走啊，听我说，那些食谱看了叫人生气，记载得很不详细，我认为最好吃的里面都没有，特别叫人生气的是看不起我们苏州的菜，都是些奇里古怪的东西，什么皇帝吃过的。皇帝有什么了不起，每天一百只菜，摆摆场面，还不知道有几只是可以吃的！乾隆皇帝为什么要三下江南呀，就是到苏州来吃的……"

我实在熬不住了："快走吧，拉南瓜去！"我把南瓜二字说得特别响，目的是让他的头脑清醒点。

"对对，我们决不能忽视南瓜，用南瓜照样可以做出上等的美味。你们的店里过去有一只名菜，名叫西瓜盅，又名西瓜鸡。那是选用四斤左右的西瓜一只，切盖，雕去内瓤，留肉约半寸许，皮外饰以花纹，备用。再以嫩鸡一只，在气锅中蒸透，放进西瓜中，合盖，再入蒸笼回蒸片刻，即可取食。食时以鲜荷叶一张衬于瓜底，碧绿清凉，增加兴味。"朱自冶背完了食谱，又摇摇头："其实那西瓜盅也是假的，鸡里并没有多少瓜味。瓜甜鸡咸，二者不配，取其清凉之色而已。我们可以创造出一只南瓜盅，把上等的八宝饭放在南瓜里回蒸，那南瓜清香糯甜，和八

restaurants like ours to take the lead. Those hard, hungry years had even made me, who'd never been greedy, crave good food. My mother went to the free market where prices were unbelievable. She bought a chicken and made some chicken broth for my wife. "Eat, my child," she urged her, tears in her eyes. "You've had a hard time these few years." Actually my wife had recovered a long time ago, but my daughter was very pleased and told everybody, "We had a chicken today," as if it was something terrific.

Zhu and Kong came back to my restaurant, not arm in arm but carrying a basket filled with sweets and pastry, each holding one side and smiling at one anothrer. Fresh from the hairdresser's, they were sleek and perfumed. Money had played its part in patching up their worn-out love.

Zhu ordered two fresh hams cooked with rock sugar and soya sauce at the exorbitant price of 20 yuan apiece and put them into two food boxes to take home. Ever since our pumpkin adventure, Zhu and I would exchange greetings and a few words on the weather whenever we met. The lean years were finally over and we could get provisions again. Exhilarated, I said to him. "I'm glad to see old customers."

He was all smiles and shook my hand, but his answer was not pleasant to the ears. "I don't have any alternative. We can't get rock sugar and fresh ham otherwise. Your prices are exorbitant."

"Eh.... Why don't you eat them now while they're hot?"

"Because they're underdone and tasteless. We'll cook them

宝饭混然一体，何况那南瓜比西瓜更有田园风味！……”

够了。这一大篇吃经念下来，已经快到码头了。我也不想打断他的话，也不再希望他有什么转变，这人是本性难移！让你去画饼充饥吧，我可要改变主意。我本来想把南瓜分给他一半，现在重新决定：分给他三分之一！

八 殊途同归

万万没有想到，一个好吃的人和一个反好吃的人居然站到一起来了！“文化大革命”中我成了走资派，朱自冶成了吸血鬼，两个人挂着牌子，一起站在居民委员会的门口请罪。

朱自冶成为吸血鬼犹可说也，我成了走资派……也有道理。因为在困难年过去之后，我觉得时机已到，可以对过去的改革加以检讨，再也不能硬把白菜炒肉丝塞到人家的嘴里了。何况当时的形势和人们的要求也逼着我的转变。领导上提出要开高级馆子、卖高价菜，借以回笼货币，我们本来就是名菜馆，更是义不容辞的。人们在困难年中饿坏了，连我这个素以不馋而自居的人，也想吃点好东西。妈妈也到自由市场上去游转，五块钱一斤豆油，十块钱一只鸡，看了摇头惊呼，还是笑嘻嘻地拎一只回来，加水煎熬，放在我爱人的面前：“吃吧，孩子，这两年苦坏了你！”老人说这话的时候眼泪都掉下来了，其实我爱人的浮肿病早已消退。只有小女儿兴高采烈，到处宣扬：“我们家

again, then put them on top of some green vegetables on a white plate to make them look nice, smell good and taste delicious. Your cooking leaves much to be desired."

This wet blanket made me regret ever having given him the pumpkins, but I decided not to show my displeasure. The food supplies were improved in 1963 and '64; I had to give my customers more shrimps so that they would remember the good times and I wouldn't feel remorseful again. But rehabilitation was a hundred times more difficult than carrying out reformation. If was always easier to go from refinement to coarseness, strictness to carelessness, diligence to laziness and from being humble to being unreasonable. To correct these tendencies was much more difficult.

Although Bao was still a waiter, he hadn't actually worked as one since I'd declared during the reform years that waiters shouldn't be humble and obsequious. He sat commandingly, like some president at a meeting, and shouted to the customers, "Hey there, you're not to take any table you like. Fill the ones in front first. Hey, didn't you hear me? Why did you slip over to the window all by yourself?"

When customers asked him, "Could you come here, comrade?" he would demand, "You want to order? The menu's on the blackboard; read it."

"Comrade, I'd like to order a couple of your famous Suzhou dishes."

"Every famous dish has a name, and they're written on the blackboard." He wouldn't budge.

今天吃了一只鸡!”好像发生了什么惊天动地的事情!

高价菜又把朱自冶吸引到我们的店里来了,而且是和孔碧霞一起来的。两个人虽然没有套着膀子,却是合拎着一只大草包,一人抓住一个拎襻,相视而笑,十分亲热。那包里装满了高级糖,高级饼,两人刚刚剃过高价头,容光焕发,喜气洋溢,一股子高级香水味。金钱又发生作用了,那垂老的爱情当然是可以弥合的。

二十元一盆的冰糖蹄膀,朱自冶一下子便买了两只,分装在两个饭盒子里。我和朱自冶自从拉了那趟南瓜之后,见了面都要点头,说两句天气,以纪念那一段共同的经历。困难终于过去了,店里有了东西卖,我也觉得增添了几分光彩。看见朱自冶来买蹄膀便和他搭话:“好呀,老顾客又回来啦!”

朱自冶也高兴,笑着,拉拉我的手,可那话却是不好听的:“没有办法呀,蹄膀和冰糖自由市场上没有,只好到你们店里来买老虎肉!”

“噢……那你为什么不乘热吃,带回去给孩子?”

“不不,你们的蹄膀没烧透,不入味。我们带回家去再烧一下,再用半斤鸡毛菜垫底,鲜红碧绿,装在雪白的瓷盘里,那才具备了色香味。你们的菜呀,还差得远呢!”

我听了有点懊丧,当时不该把南瓜分给他三分之一。可我也接受了教训,决不把这股气

I would get complaints at almost every meal. "We've come to eat, not to be pushed around." I made apologies and called a staff meeting to look at our work, criticize each other and establish proper guidelines.

When the "cultural revolution" broke out these became my "crimes". I was accused of restoring capitalism and forcing the revolutionary masses to wait on city lords.

Bao became a leader of the revolutionary masses and headed straight for me, thinking that if you overthrew a director or a manager you could take their place. Since the director had already been overthrown by others he had to be content with overthrowing me, and he did have the qualifications to attack me: he had a clean record, had always supported the revolutionary line, and even more precious, he'd boycotted my restoration activities as early as 1963 and had been cruelly suppressed by me. That wasn't a lie, for I had criticized him in 1963. His remark about every famous dish having a name had been quoted in the newspapers and although his name wasn't mentioned he felt the pressure all the same. Therefore, his condemnation of my "crimes" had a particularly vehement tone: "It was a time when black clouds hung low over the city. I was alone and powerless and had to capitulate to his wishes. How I wanted to. . . ." He often read novels during working hours and had picked up a lot of phrases which he used as heavy bombs against me. I'd taken him as my righthand man and had told him about my life, about things like running errands for Zhu and living in

扩散到别人的头上去。六三、六四年的供应情况又和大跃进之前差不多了，我要致力于炒虾仁，使人对这美好的日子留下更深刻的记忆，人总不能老是后悔。可这恢复工作比我当初的改革困难百倍，从精细到粗放，从严格到马虎，从紧张到懒散，从谦逊到无理都是比较容易的，要它逆转可得费点劲儿哩！

包坤年早就不当"店小二"了，这是在我的启发下改变的。他的行政职务虽然还是服务员(对此他很有意见)，服务的时候却像个会议的主持人，高坐在那会场似的店堂里。吃客拥进店堂时他便高声大喊："喂喂，不要乱坐，先把前面的桌子坐满！听见没有，你为什么一个人溜到窗子口？"

"同志，请你来一下。"

"要点菜吗？看黑板，都写着咧。"

"同志，我想要两只苏州名菜。"

"名菜？每一只菜都有名字，写得清清楚楚的。"

几乎每天都有吃客吵到我的面前："我们是来吃饭的，不是来受气的！"我忙着给人家赔不是，同时抓紧时间开会，做思想工作，订服务公约，批评别人，检查自己。还得感谢我们苏州的滑稽艺术家张幻尔——祝他安息。他那时编演了一个滑稽戏，名叫《满意不满意》。这戏还真帮了我不少忙，我还请他到店里来做了一次报告，他的报告比我的报告有效，所以便招待了他一顿，没有收钱，是在宣传费用中报销的。

his house rent free and so on. I'd told him partly to show the injustice of the old society and partly to make conversation. Now he put it all together and denounced me.

"This unrepentant capitalist roader was bought by the capitalists when still an boy. Seeing the inevitable end of the Kuomintang he sneaked to the liberated area with ulterior motives. After Liberation he pretended to be active in order to worm his way up to usurp power and restore capitalism when the opportunity arose." His accusation, though groundless, was logical, for I had in reality gone to the liberated area on the eve of Liberation and had worked very hard and then been promoted to manager. I'd intended to alter my way of management when the opportunity arose after the bad years. You could look at a thing from lots of angles. If you made up your mind to call any animal a horse no matter what it was, then it couldn't be otherwise.

"Bao has a point. All property owners collect rent; why didn't Zhu make him pay? It's been a long time. What's their relationship?" People wondered. They weren't malicious, just curious.

Bao went to our neighbourhood committee to interrogate Zhu and try to dig up incriminating facts.

Besides being a glutton, Zhu's other weakness was his fear of pain. As soon as Bao rolled up his sleeves and pounded the table threateningly he started trembling and admitted to everything.

"Speak up, did you buy Gao Xiaoting?"

以上种种，到了“文化大革命”中自然就成了罪孽，说我是全面复辟了资本主义，伤天害理地强迫革命群众去服侍城市里的老爷！张幻尔的那一顿饭也不是好吃的，陪着我狠狠地被斗了一整天！

包坤年成了头头了，对准着我造反。他那时有一种错觉：认为打倒了局长便可以当局长，打倒了经理便可以当经理。局长已经被人家抢先打倒了，他也只好屈就点。他确实也具备了各种对我造反的条件：历史清白，一贯拥护革命路线，最最难得的是在一九六三年便抵制过我的复辟行为，遭到过我的残酷打击！这话也并非完全捏造，一九六三年我是批评过他，他那名菜都有名字的妙语，还被报纸上的一篇文章引用过，虽然没有点名，总会有点压力。所以他在控诉我的罪行时总是义愤填膺，热泪盈眶：“那时候黑云压城城欲摧，我势单力薄，孤军奋斗，只好暂时屈服在他的淫威下面，我盼啊，盼啊……”包坤年经常在店堂里看小说，词儿是不少的，也不空洞，他对我的情况十分熟悉，重磅炸弹都捏在他手里，那时候他老是跟着我转，我也把他当作左右手，可算是无话不谈的。诸如我小时候曾经帮朱自冶买过小吃，住了他家的房子不给钱等等。有些话是为了说明旧社会的不平，有些话纯属闲聊，并无目的。包坤年把这些事儿都串起来了，批道：

“这个死不改悔的走资派，从小便被资本家收买，眼看蒋家皇朝的末日已到，便带着不可告人的目的混入我解放区。解放初期伪装积

"Yes.... I did."

"How did you do it?"

"I gave him money."

"Where did you give it to him?"

"At the wineshop."

"How much?"

"Hundreds of thousands of dollars."

"How could you get such a large sum out of the bank?"

"I didn't need to go to the bank. It was all small notes, devalued Kuomintang money."

"You call that money too? What's the use of devalued money? Tell me about your collaboration after Liberation."

"There was't any. He hasn't been very polite to me."

"Rubbish! Take him away," Bao snapped.

"Have mercy on me, I remember now. During the famine, he gave me a lot of pumpkins."

Alas, that was iron-clad proof of my "crime". It got even worse later when they finally got hold of Kong, whose ex-husband in Hongkong had sent her canned food during the bad years. A reader of detective stories. Bao could weave them himself: An undercover agent, Kong received secret instructions in the cans her husband sent while I supplied her with state secrets. Look, three fifty in the morning, Zhu, wearing an American raincoat and a cap (he hadn't worn a cap that night), smoked five cigarettes in a row. At five o'-clock sharp, Gao Xiaoting had appeared with a cart, looked around and whispered, "Let's go...." This detective story

极向上爬，攫取了权力；一有机会便全面复辟资本主义，为他的主子效力！”这些话虽然不合事实，却也很有逻辑性。我是在蒋家皇朝末日已到时到解放区去的，解放初期我是很努力，当了经理当然有了权力，一有机会是改变过经营管理！任何事情只要先把它的性质肯定下来，怎么说都有理，而且是不需要什么学问的。“白马非马”，如果我首先肯定了你是只马，那就不管你是白的还是黑的，你怎么玄也休想滑得过去！要不然的话，世界上的黑白为什么会那样容易就被颠倒了呢？

也有人出于一种好奇心理：“是呀，哪有房屋资本家是不收房钱的？不是一天两天啊，一住几十年，这里面到底是什么关系？”这些人并无恶意，只是想知道人与人之间的秘密关系。

包坤年可要抓住这些关系做文章了，立刻通过居民委员会去外调。

这个朱自冶呀，没说头。他除掉好吃之外还有个致命的弱点——怕打。当包坤年把袖管一捋，桌子一拍，他就语无伦次，浑身发抖。

“说，你有没有收买过高小庭？”

“收……收买过的。”

“怎么收买的？”

“经常给他钱。”

“在什么地方给的？”

“在酒店里。”

“总共给了多少？”

“大……大约有几十万。”

had a good beginning and sold well. He was invited to speak at a lot of places. He spun his story out while I had to stand bending over and answer questions too.

"Do you admit your crimes?"

"Yes, I do." And I really did. It had been wrong of me to encourage and promote Bao instead of criticizing him when he came to me with the story about Chef Yang opening an underground restaurant with a coquettish woman collecting the money when all Yang had done was have a meal at Kong's. If he could get promoted by lying, then what would stop him making up even more lies? The more he gained from telling lies, the greater his lies would be.

"Answer me. Are you guilty of a monstrous crime for which you deserve to die?"

I refused to answer. I didn't want to die. I wanted to live. I wanted to correct my mistakes. I wanted to live for the cause of communism, something for which I would gladly give my life.

Blows rained down on me. They weren't violent but they pierced my heart like daggers. I felt that I had practically placed the dagger in Bao's hand myself.

The neighbourhood committee couldn't just sit doing nothing, so since Bao had dealt with me, they made Zhu, Kong and me confess our mistakes in front of the committee every morning. Zhu and I were finally side by side.

Standing outside the neighbourhood committee with a placard round my neck was worse than standing on a plat-

“啊！这么多的钱你是怎样从银行里取出来的？”

“用，用不着取，是零钱，对对，是伪币。”

幸亏包坤年要比我的老祖母明白得多，如果他也只知道铜板和银元的话，很可能要闹笑话。

“伪币？……伪币也是钱！快说，解放以后你们是怎么勾结的？”

“没有。解放以后他对我不大客气。”

“胡说，把他带走！”

“啊啊，我该死，我忘了，困难年他还给了我一车南瓜哩！”该死的朱自冶呀，他忘了说三分之一，为了这个数字，还害得我多挨了几拳头！

这下子不得了啦，证据确凿，罪行累累！更不得了的还在后面呢，三转两绕把个孔碧霞也牵出来了。她的前夫解放前夕逃往香港，困难年还从香港给她寄过罐头，秘密指令就藏在罐头里！她是潜伏特务，我和特务内外勾结，窃取国家机密……包坤年看的都是反特小说，看多了自己也会编。你看：天亮前的三点五十五分，朱自冶穿着一件美制的雨衣（那件破雨衣确实是美国货），歪戴着一顶鸭舌帽（没有戴），站在电灯柱下徘徊，连续不断地抽了五支香烟。准四点，高小庭拉着板车从巷子里出来，左右这么一看，轻轻地说了一声：“走……”故事的开头很有吸引力，因而十分畅销，到处请他去作批判发言。他没完没了地讲着，我弯成45°角站在那里，还要不时地回答问题：

form being condemned. When I looked down at the large audience I never knew how many of them actually knew me personally. At the neighbourhood committee everyone who went by was known to me. This old lady with a shopping basket had known me since I was a boy, that woman had invited me to her wedding, that boy always called me uncle. I lowered my head and looked at the ground. They would take a detour or quicken their steps, feeling bad at seeing someone who had neither stolen nor robbed standing there like a man sentenced to death. I identified them by their shoes and the way they walked, particularly my mother, whose feet had been bound and later unbound. She'd hovered near me countless times in her life. Now her steps were heavy and hesitant.

A'er paid less attention. As he went by he would cough loudly and then whisper, "Hang on."

Kong couldn't take it. After half an hour, she collapsed and cut her face.

My disgust for Zhu increased tenfold. I stood as far away from him as I could, showing that he and I didn't belong in the same category.

The following morning, A'er came with a big cart loaded with iron and wooden poles and ropes. Twenty burly porters wearing straw hats were following behind. Stopping right behind us, someone demanded, "Who told you people to stand here?"

Frightened again, Zhu blurted out, "The head of the

“你有没有罪?”

“有罪，我有罪!”我确实承认自己有罪。当年包坤年听说杨中宝到孔碧霞家吃饭，便编造出杨中宝开地下饭店，而且还有个妖里妖气的女人收钱。我不但没有批评他，却从自己的需要出发，对他重用，加以鼓励。如果编造谎言能得到好处的话，那他为什么不编呢?好处越大，他就会编得更加离奇!

“回答，你是不是罪该万死!”

我拒不回答。我不想死，我要活。我有错误要纠正，还有那愿意为之牺牲的共产主义事业……

拳头又落到我的身上来了，打得并不重，却像刀尖刺在心头，我总觉得包坤年握着的刀柄，有一半儿是我作成的!

居民委员会也不能没有表示，可那批斗的事儿都给包坤年包了，他们捞不到，只好勒令我和朱自冶、孔碧霞早晨到居委会的门口请罪。我和朱自冶终于站到了一起!

挂着牌子站在居委会的门口请罪，那滋味比“押上台来!”更难受。押上台去向下一看，黑压压的一大片，也不知道有几个人是我认识的。站在居委会的门口就不同了，巷子里早晨进出的都是熟人。那拎着菜篮的老太是看着我长大的，那阿嫂结婚的时候曾经请我坐过席，那孩子嘛……前几天见了我还喊叔叔哩!我低着头不敢看人，人们也不忍看我。好端端的一个人，又不偷又不抢，怎么突然之间像个吊死鬼似的，一动不动地竖在那里!有人绕道

neighhourhood committee."

A'er gestured to one of them. "Go and get him."

Five or six men dragged the man out.

"Did you tell them to stand here?" they asked him.

Sensing trouble, he replied, "May I ask which faction you belong to?"

"The rod faction. You mind that people are not allowed to stand here and block the traffic." The men began to take up their rods.

The committee head tried to calm things down. "We can talk it over, revolutionary comrades."

A'er spoke up: "If you feel you must punish them, then make them sweep the street round that corner."

A man who knew his way around, the head understood his intention at once, and avoiding the beating he might get if he gave them a hard time, he quickly motioned us off. "Go home and get your brooms."

A'er threw me a cheerful glance. "Get going, don't dawdle. And do a thorough job."

I had to laugh. The street they were talking about was a dead end lane of only thirty metres or so, it wouldn't take us long to do it.

But I couldn't escape Zhu, who always tagged along behind me trying to find ways of expressing his gratitude.

"You have a loyal friend," he told me.

I could hardly stop myself blurting out, "Our friendship doesn't come from eating and drinking together."

走了，绕不掉的人便匆匆地奔过去，装着没看见。偏偏我又能从他们的脚步和鞋袜上看得出是谁。看得最准确的当然是我的妈妈了，她小时候缠过足，后来才放开，那双半大的脚围着儿子转过多少回啊，如今是那么沉重而零乱，歪斜而迟疑。

只有阿二满不在乎，他走到我身边便高声咳嗽，轻轻地说："别着急，先熬着点。"

孔碧霞可熬不住呀，她是个爱打扮而又讲风度的人，如今剃了个阴阳头，挂着个女特务的牌子站在那里。特务而加女字，更容易引起人们的注目和非议，因为谁都不会想到女特务会做菜，总是想到女特务会搞一些乱七八糟的男女关系。再加上那个该死的朱自冶，居然交代他曾经看到孔碧霞从外国罐头上剥下商标纸，一直压在玻璃台板里，破四旧的时候才烧毁。使得包坤年的故事里又多了一个情节。这密码就在商标纸的背后！孔碧霞又羞、又恨、又急，站了不到半个小时便砰然一声倒地，满脸鲜血，人事不省。亏得居委会主任并不存心要和谁作对，便叫人把她搀了回去。

我对朱自冶更加反感了，请罪的时候都离他远点，表示我和他并非同类。你朱自冶好吃倒也罢了，在那样的情况下，好吃根本就算不了一回事体。可你为什么那么怕打，为了一时的苟安，竟然不顾夫妻情义，提供那种不负责任的细节。由此我也得出结论，好吃成性的人都是懦弱的，他会采取一切手段，不顾任何是非，拼命地去保护、满足那只小得十分可怜而又十分难看的胃！

After a Long Absence

It was a full nine years before I saw Zhu again, during which time I and my family were sent to the countryside. He was probably still living in No. 54.

Nine years is a long time. My own experience, what I saw and heard in those nine years, made me think about the whole issue of food. I passed my fiftieth birthday deep in thought.

On my birthday, my mother killed a chicken and got a bottle of good liquor through a friend. I drank three glasses in low spirits and was suddenly seized with fear. I'd turned fifty before I knew it! After Liberation, when I'd gone to meetings with men in their fifties I'd taken it upon myself to help them up and down steps; to me they were old people. In the country, a man of fifty with filial children did not expect to carry heavy loads any more. "Greying temples but no achievements makes a hero tearful and sad." Though I was no hero, I shed a few tears of regret too. Tearful and tipsy, I let my thoughts run wild. "If I am given a post again, first I want to.... Second, I want to...." It was like a dream. Dreams can sometimes come true, but only with a lot of difficulty.

After those disastrous years, I went back to Suzhou, this time not with all my belongings on my back but with my family, my bits and pieces, my furniture and farm tools,

第二天一早，阿二带着二十多个搬运工人来了，一个个身强力壮，头上戴着柳条帽。队伍由一部大榻车开路，榻车上装着杠棒、绳索和铁钎。车子到了我们的面前时便往下一停，有人大喝一声："是谁叫你们站在这里的?"

朱自冶又吓了，慌忙回答："是居委会主任。"

阿二把手一挥："去几个人，把主任找来。"

五、六个人同时拥进大门，把主任拉到了大门口。

"是你叫他们站在这里的?"

"是的，请问你们是哪一派的?"居委会主任感到有些来者不善。

"我们是杠棒派，告诉你，这里不许站人，妨碍交通!"说着便有人到榻车上抽杠棒，拿铁钎。

居委会主任连忙摆手："革命的同志们，这件事情可以商议，可以商议。"

阿二说："这样吧，如果你觉得不好交代的话，那就叫他们到拐弯的弄堂里去扫地。"

居委会主任是个很有社会经验的人，他立刻明白了阿二的用意，也没有必要冒挨打的风险，便对我们挥挥手："回去，各人回家去拿扫帚。"

阿二高兴地瞟了我一眼："不许偷懒，扫得干净点!"

我听了暗自发笑，那拐弯的弄堂是条死弄堂，总共不到三十米，划不了几扫帚。

可是我却无法和朱自冶分开，我扛着扫帚

which filled a truck. Suzhou felt both familiar and strange. The streets were still the same. But where had all the people come from? Suzhou people preferred window-shopping to going to parks when they had free time. Now, the streets were so crowded you had to pick your way carefully when crossing and if you met a friend you could only shout loudly on the curb while a stream of people continuously brushed past you. the city's population had swollen rather than decreased, although a lot of people and their families had been sent to the countryside. I'd been squeezed out of my home and had to put up at a relative's for the time being. This suited me fine, since I could keep my distance form Zhu, who was in another part of the city.

A man from the organization department came to talk to me. He was about my age. The man who'd wanted to starve me for three days and who'd later become the director of the organization department was no more. May he rest in peace.

"We've been considering sending you back to your old job. How do you feel about that?"

I was overcome by emoton. If that old director had been there I would have broken down right in front of him. You needn't starve me any more, director. I fully realize the significance of food now. And you can relax, Bighead Ding, I won't force cabbage and shredded meat on my customers anymore. I want to work hard and make up for lost time, work for you and for the old director.

"Don't be upset. What's done is done. We've still got a lot

进弄堂，他也紧紧地钉在我后面，我扫他也扫，我歇他也歇，还要找机会向我表示谢意："还是你的朋友好，够交情！"

我忍不住叫出来了："我的朋友是不讲吃喝的！"

九　士别三日

其实并不是别了三日，三三得九，整整九年我没有见到过朱自冶。他大概还住在五十四号里，我与全家下放到农村去了九年。

九年的时间不算太短了，所见所闻再加上亲身的经历，足够我进一步思考吃饭的问题。在思考中度过了五十大寿。

过生日的那一天，妈妈杀了一只老母鸡，开后门弄来一斤洋河大曲，我闷闷地喝了几杯。三杯下肚之后突然惶恐起来，怎么搞的，什么事儿还没有干呐，却已经到了五十岁！解放初期我和五十多岁的老先生一起开会，上下台阶都得看着他点。在我的印象中，年过半百已经是老人了；在农民的生活中，五十岁的人如果有儿有女而且儿女都很孝顺的话，他是不挑重担的。"一事无成两鬓斑，常使英雄泪满衫！"我虽然不是英雄，却也流下了几滴眼泪。我在泪眼与醉意中胡思乱想：如果能让我重新工作的话，我第一要……第二要……简直像在做梦似的。梦也是一种预感吧，它有时候也能实现，只是实现起来不如梦中那么容易。

to get through."

I nodded. It goes without saying that food supplies are the first thing on the list to be affected whenever there is a disaster. And once the bad times are over, the first place people rush to is the food market; after that they buy their clothing, electric fans and TV sets.

I wasn't wrong in my guess, although I'd overlooked two things. After the ten years of chaos people began to look up old army mates, relatives, former classmates and bosses. Some of them had been held in custody for ten years, others had faded into obscurity ever since the 1957 anti-Rightist movement. People made inquiries: was so-and-so still alive, where were they, etc. Every household had their surprises, "My goodness... where have you been all these years?" Opponent of eating though I was, I couldn't oppose dinners in such situations. I was human; I had feelings too. If Ding could come and see me now, I would have feasted him for three days running.

One other thing I han't foreseen was the rise of tourism. The word "tourism" was never used before and such activities were called "enjoying the mountains and rivers", which had something of a derogatory meaning. Now we gave "tourism" a new meaning — seeing and appreciating the beautiful mountains and rivers of our native land. Anyway, whatever the meaning might be, I had no objection to people going out sightseeing. We particularly welcomed foreign tourists to see our culture and spend their foreign currency.

灾难过去之后，我又回到了苏州。这一次可不是背着背包回来了，一家大小，瓶瓶罐罐，台凳桌椅，农具家什装满了一卡车。我对苏州城有点不习惯了，觉得它既陌生又熟悉。大街小巷都没有变，可是哪来的这么多人哩！苏州人没有事儿并不是游园林，而是荡马路。如今，你连过马路都得当心点！在大街上碰到多年不见的熟人时，只能站在人行道的边上讲话，讲话要提高嗓门，还不停地有人从你的肩膀上擦来擦去。大批下放并没有能减少城市的人口，却把个原来比较安静的城市涨得满满地。涨得我连个安身之处也没有了，只好借住在亲戚的家里。也好，这下子可以和那朱自冶离得远点。他在城东，我在城西。

组织部的同志找我去谈话，那位同志也和我差不多的年纪。当年要饿我三天的老部长早已不在了，祝他安息，在“文化大革命”中，他在另外一个城市里“自动跳楼”。什么都懂的丁大头也不在了，他就死在“什么都懂”的上面，而我这个什么都似懂非懂的人却活到了今天……

“组织上考虑，你还是回到原来的工作岗作，有什么意见？”

我什么意见也没有，只是感到一阵心酸，忍不住自己的眼泪。如果坐在我面前的还是老部长的话，我会和他抱头痛哭的！老部长啊，你再也用不着饿我三天了，我已经深深地懂得了吃饭的意义；放心吧，丁大头，我再也不会硬把白菜炒肉丝塞到人家的嘴里。我要拼命地干，

The rockery and pools of the Suzhou gardens might be artificial, but all the earth's culture was made by people. Real mountains and rivers might be wonderful, but they weren't culture; they came from heaven. Besides, with no boasting on my part, the artificial gardens of Suzhou were more characteristic, more concentrated, perfect and unique than real ones.

And what about Suzhou cuisine? Well, manager, in this ancient paradise food was on a par with scenery. Since I wasn't opposed to dinners and tourism and welcomed foreign visitors, my restaurant had to catch up.

We had a hard time in the beginning; my customers just weren't satisfied. Not enough seats, too little variety, bad service, so on and so forth. They criticized and complained. Some had a go at me about it. Once Bao even came to blows with a few young men.

After the fight, he came to me with an embarrassed look on his face. "I... I treated you badly in the past, Manager Gao."

I brushed it off. "Forget it, it wasn't entirely your fault. If you've come to apologize, you can stop right now. If you've come about something else, then just say what's on your mind."

Bao hesitated a little. "I've... got a bad temper. I don't think I'm much of a waiter; my attitude annoys people. In the past I had some wild ideas about being somebody. I know now that you can only get on in the world if you've got

我要把时间放大三倍，一份为了老部长，一份为了你……

“不要激动，过去的都过去了，困难还在前面。”

我点点头。这是用不着说的，每次灾难都是首先影响到吃饭；灾难过去之后第一个浪头便是向食品市场冲击，然后才想到打扮，想到电风扇和电视机。

我的估计没有错，但是还有两点没有估计在内。十年动乱以后乱是停止了，可那动却是大面积的！人们到处走动，纷纷接上关系。访战友，看亲戚，老同学，老上级，有的被关押了十年，有的从反右以后便失去了联系。人们相互打听，谁谁有没有死，谁谁又在哪里。“好呀，看看去！”几乎是每一个家庭都会发生一次惊呼：“啊呀，你怎么来啦……”我虽然反对好吃，可是在这种情况之下并不反对请客。我也是人，也是有感情的，如果丁大头还能来看我的话，我得好好地请他吃三天！

还有一点没有估计在内，那就是旅游的兴起。旅游这个词儿以前我们不大用，一般地都叫作“游山玩水”，含有贬义。现在有新意了，是领略祖国的山河之美。不管是什么意思，我都不反对，人是动物，应该到处走走。特别是欢迎外国朋友们来走走，请他们看看我们民族的文化，顺便赚点儿外汇。别以为苏州的园林都是假山假水，人工造的，试问：世界上哪有一种文化不是人为的？真山真水虽然伟大，但那算不了文化，是上帝给的。何况苏州的园林假得比

qualifications. So I want to learn some kind of skill."

"You want to quit?"

"No, that wouldn't be very practical. I want to learn to cook. I think I can learn to do it better than others."

"Well." I thought about it. Bao's attitude couldn't change overnight. He might come to blows again. Then again the kitchen was short of hands; we needed more chefs. I gave him my consent.

Bao was very pleased. "You can relax," he told everyone. "That capitlist roader isn't the sort of person to bear a grudge. Although I beat him up before, he hasn't paid me back. Since all you've done is write a few posters about him, you don't have anything to fear."

Don't belittle Bao's declaration. It had the effect of reassuring people. After those chaotic years, people wanted a more peaceful life. If they grumbled a bit, it was because they were impatient for improvement. This was no bad thing. Impatience gave some kind of impetus; it was better than indifference.

We studied the customers' comments book. Apart from our bad service, other things were brought up too, such as the quantity and quality of the food, quick service for those who wanted to go out sighteeing, patience with those who wanted to be left in peace when old friends got together. Some of them placed more importance on famous specialities and others on reasonable prices. Some of them had lost their tempers at having to wait too long, others complained about

真的还典型、集中、完美，全世界独一无二，不是吹的！

苏州的饭菜呢？经理。在这个古老的天堂里吃和玩本来是并驾齐驱的，你既然不反对请客，不反对旅游，还欢迎外国朋友，那就不能落后，落后了是要挨打的。

可不是，开始的那阵子人们意见纷纷，什么吃饭难呀，品种少呀，态度坏呀。有人提意见，有人发牢骚，有人指着我的鼻子骂山门。那包坤年还和一帮青年人打了起来，真的挨了几拳头！没有办法，包坤年也需要有个恢复的过程。“文化大革命”期间他不是服务员，而是司令员，到时候哨子一吹，满堂的吃客起立，跟着他读语录，做首先敬祝，然后宣布吃饭纪律：一号窗口拿菜，二号窗口拿饭，三号窗口拿汤；吃完了自己洗碗，大水槽就造在店堂里，他把当初的改革发展到登峰造极！

别人对我发牢骚，我也对别人发牢骚，我的牢骚只能私下里发：“现在的事啊，难哪……”不能在店堂里发，如果伙着大家一起发的话，那不是要把店堂吵炸啦！我得注意点，年岁也不小了，不能那么毛毛糙糙。特别是对包坤年，得讲个团结，他整天都在等着我打击报复呢！不错，他在“文化大革命”中打过人，但也只是打过我，没有打过别人。朱自冶招得快，没有挨过打，孔碧霞也不是他打的。他自己也是上当受骗，又没有能当上经理，牢骚要比我多几倍！

the cost. My conclusion was that I should neither force cabbage and shredded meat on people nor do away with it entirely, but should improve its flavour.

I introduced foreign ideas into my restaurant by serving fast food — one dish, a soup and a bowl of rice. People could eat quickly and head out sightseeing. Actually the fast food wasn't much different from ordinary mass-produced food; it just sounded more efficient. I had the ground floor seats changed into booths so it seemed like being on a train.

Young people liked the idea and the lower prices.

When I was young all I knew about was tractors, while they knew about revolving restaurants abroad. How they revolved I had no idea, but my booths had a feeling of motion too. And the fast food wasn't bad: there were also side dishes of fish, spare ribs, shrimps and chicken. One young man even snapped his fingers at me and said, "Hey, bring me a bottle of whiskey." This I didn't agree with; I was afraid whiskey and vodka were more or less the same.

Upstairs we served hot food and the space was repartitioned and furnished with square tables and imitation redwood chairs. Big round table tops could be put on the ordinary tables for large groups. Green plants decorated the corners. Old people nodded in approval, "It's just like it used to be." Actually it wasn't exactly the same, otherwise they would have said, "What's the matter with these people? It's all run down after twenty years."

While I was up to my neck in renovation work, I heard

包坤年挨了人家几拳之后，便到办公室里来找我，面部的表情是很尴尬的："高经理，我……过去，对不起你……"

我连忙摇手："算了算了，过去的事情别提，那也不能完全怪你。如果你是来检讨的话，那就到此为止；如果你有什么事儿的话，那就直说，不必顾虑。"

包坤年翻翻眼睛，半信半疑："我想……我这个人不适宜于当服务员，说话的嗓门儿都是两样的，容易惹人家生气。过去的那些年胡思乱想，都是不切实际。今后再也不能靠吵吵喊喊了，要凭本事吃饭，技术第一。所以我想好好地学点儿技术。"

"你想离开饭店？"

"不，那也是不现实的。我想去当厨师，学烧菜。不管怎么样，我学起来总比别人方便。"

"噢……"我的脑子转悠着，考虑两个问题：一是包坤年的服务态度恐怕一时难改，很难保证他在相当长的时间内不和人家打起来。二是厨房里确实也需要人，培养年轻的厨师已经成了大问题。我二话没说，马上同意。

包坤年十分满意，到处宣扬："放心，这个走资派是不会打击报复的，我那么打他，他都没有记仇，你贴了张把大字报，发过几次言有什么关系！"

别小看了包坤年的宣扬，还真起了点稳定人心的作用。人心思治，谁也不想再翻来覆去。牢骚虽多，可那牢骚也是想把事情做好，不是想把事情弄坏，只不过性急了一点。性急也是一种动力，总比漫不经心好一些。

the odd comment drifting by. "In the past this old fellow tore down the partitions. Now he's putting them back again; why couldn't he have been smarter before?" My heart sank; I'd become an old fellow. Well, I might be old, but why did they call me "old fellow"? Anyway, my repartitioning was certainly an improvement on the former, only it had taken twenty years to do. That I felt bad about.

Renovating the place and intoducing a few foreign methods was easy enough to do, but traditional cuisine posed a much more difficult problem since our skilful chefs were few. Yang and his peers had all retired. The young chefs were quite ignorant about a lot of traditional dishes and wanted to learn. They'd heard about Yang's skill and were eager to learn from him. They must have heard how I'd treated him too. History is recorded by word of mouth as well as by books.

I decided to look Yang up and ask him to give lectures to the staff, hoping that he wouldn't bear old grudges. We would pay him well and treat his like a professsor.

It was raining hard that day, but I decided to go anyway. Yang was quite moved that I'd come in the heavy rain. "You still haven't forgiveness me," he said. He'd aged a lot and was hobbling and a bit deaf. When I told him why I'd come and asked his forgotten about the past he grasped my hand and said, "Save your breath, I've already forgotten. I still think of the restaurant as my home; that's where I learned, that's where I grew up. Whether you'd invited me or not,

我和同志们仔细地研究了吃客的意见，发现除掉有关服务态度之外，要求也很不统一。有的要吃饱，有的要吃好；有的要吃得快（赶着去玩儿），有的不能催（老朋友相聚）；有的首先问名菜，有的首先问价钱；有人发火是等出来的，有人发牢骚是因为价钱太贵。不能把白菜炒肉丝硬塞在人家的嘴里，可那白菜炒肉丝也是不可少的，只是要炒得好一些。

我的思想也解放了，不搞一刀切，还引进了一点洋玩艺。不叫大众菜，叫“快餐”，一菜、一汤、一碗饭，吃了快去游园林，否则时间来不及。其实那快餐也和大众菜差不多，只是听起来还有点儿效率。否则的话，人家一看“大众”便上楼，谁都欢喜个高级。我们把楼下改成快餐部，一律是火车座，皮靠椅，坐在那里吃饭也好像是在旅行似的。青年人特别满意，带劲儿，又新鲜，又花不了他们几个钱。我年轻的时候只知道拖拉机，他们现在比我当年懂得多，还知道外国有种餐厅是会转的。怎么个转法我也不知道，反正在火车座儿里吃饭也有动的意味。当然，快餐的味道也不错，如果要添菜也可以，熏鱼、排骨、油爆虾、白斩鸡都是现成的。有个青年朋友吃得高兴起来还对着我打响指：“喂，最好来瓶威士忌！”这一点我没有同意，我担心那威士忌和伏特加也是差不多的。

楼上设立炒菜部，把会场似的店堂再改过来，分隔成大小不同的房间，一律是八仙桌，仿红木的靠背椅，人多可加圆台面，墙角里还放

英汉对照
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I'd still have come to visit my old colleagues before I kick the bucket. I've heard you're doing pretty well."

I was moved by his magnanimity. He was still enthusiastic about our work, and his enthusiasm was even greater than mine.

He came accompanied by his grandson. He looked round the place, nodding with approval all the while, saying it was incomparably better than before. Spacious kitchens, refrigerators, ventilators, white stoves and modern cooking utensils — it was better equipped than the kitchen of the foreign affairs office where he'd worked. He studied our menu very carefully.

The whole staff came to his lecture. I asked him to speak openly and concentrate on our shortcomings. He spoke well and had a sense of propriety.

"I'm impressed with your work. Your menu includes almost all of Suzhou's specialities and the cooking is good. Of course you're hampered by the lack of ingredients and the large quantities you have to prepare. But that can't be helped; you've got a lot of people to serve and they don't mind what they spend. I've been told that you've never heard of some of our most famous specialities, which is because one dish can have a lot of different names. For instance, what's rather grandly called the 'supreme dish' is only baked rice soup...."

The audience burst out laughing.

"Yes, baked rice soup, you've got it on your menu, but

几盆铁树什么的。老年人欢喜怀旧，进门一看便点头："唔，还是和过去一样的！"其实和过去也不一样了，如果真和过去一样的话，他们也会有意见："怎么搞的，二十多年了，还是这样破破烂烂的！"

当我忙得满身尘土，焦头烂额的时候，背后也有人说闲话："都是这个老家伙，当年拆也是他，现在隔也是他，早干什么的！"我听了心往下沉，什么，我也成了老家伙啦，老……老得还可以嘛，那家伙二字是什么含义？也罢，干活儿不能动手抓，总得使几样家伙的。何况我从拆到造也不是简单的重复，内中有改进，有发展，这就叫不破不立。遗憾的是从破到立竟然花去了二十多年，我的心里也是不好受的。

改造店堂和引进一点洋玩艺都好办，要恢复传统的名菜，全面地提高质量就难了，难在缺少人材。杨中宝和他的同辈人都纷纷退休了，有的是到了年龄，有的是想尽办法提早退休，好让子女顶替。名菜虽然都有名字，有些菜名青年人连听也没有听到过，他们的心里也很急，纷纷要求学习，而且对杨中宝十分想念。许多人虽然没有见过杨中宝，但都听师傅说起过，说杨中宝的手艺如何如何，肯定也会说我当年对杨中宝是怎样怎样的。历史不仅是写在书中，还有口碑世代流传！

我决定去求见杨中宝，希望他不记前隙，来为我们讲课，按教授待遇，每课给八块钱。

我去的那天天下大雨，大雨也要去！

杨中宝见我冒雨而来，十分感动："啊

there are a lot of famous dishes that you can't put on the menu. Take fish lung soup for example. The fish lungs are only the size of broad beans. Where can you buy those in quantity? Actually the lung itself doesn't have much taste; what make it delicious are the other ingredients and the monosodium glutamate. It became famous only because Yu Youren, a big Kuomintang official, wrote a poem about it after he had it in the Shijia Restaurant. Then both the restaurant and the soup became well-known. Some dishes have become known half from word of mouth and half for their quaintness."

I sat back and heaved a long sigh of relief.

"There are a lot of improvements you can still make. Why kill the fish the day before and keep it in the fridge? Why leave your fresh vegetables in the sun? Everything except you alcohol should be fresh. In the past we took only three minutes from killing a chicken to cooking stir-fried chicken breast."

Bao raised his hand. "Can you tell us the secret of that kind of speed, Master Yang?"

"Actually there isn't one. You just have to have everything ready and work fast. You kill the chicken, plunge it in hot water, pluck the breast only and take the meat. Then dice and stir-fry it. Of course this was a demonstration dish and could make a chef famous."

Yang talked for about two hours and then went to the kitchen to give a demonstration. He was in good spirits and refused to take a break, but he tired himself out and had to

……你还没有忘记我!”他确实老了,行动蹒跚,耳朵也有点不便。当我说明来意并作了检讨之后,他紧紧地握住我的手,拍拍我的手背:“你呀,还说这些干什么呢,那些事我早就忘光了。我只记得那里是我的娘家,我在那里学徒,在那里长大。我发过几次狠了,临死之前一定要回娘家去看看兄弟姐妹。你请也要去,不请也要去,听说你们现在忙得不错哩!”

我听了很感动,这是一个老工人的胸怀,也是一个老工人的心意,他对我们的事业是有感情的,那感情比我深厚。

杨中宝来了,是由他的孙子陪同来的。他先把我们的店里里外外看了一遍,不停地点头叫好,说是和过去简直不能比。特别是那宽大的厨房,冰箱、排气风扇,炊事用具,雪白的灶头,他当年在交际处也没有这种条件。我把所有菜单都请他过目,他看得十分仔细。

杨中宝开讲的时候,全店上下都来了,把个小会场挤得满满的。我请他解放思想,放开来讲,多讲缺点。可是杨中宝讲得很有分寸,入情入理:

“我看了,你们工作得蛮好。要说苏州的名菜,你们差不多全有了,烧得也好。缺点是原料不足和卖得太多引起的。这事很难办,现在吃得起的人太多,十块八块全不在乎。据讲有些名菜你们连听也没有听见过,这也难怪,一种菜往往会有很多名字。比如说苏州的‘天下第一菜’,听起来很吓人,其实就是锅巴汤……”

下面轰地一声笑起来了。

rest for a fortnight afterwards.

I'd thought of sending in a report asking permission to have Yang supervise our chefs and be given extra pay. But now I thought I'd better not bother him and just let him enjoy his retired life in peace. However the young people were very enthusiastic and wanted to keep on. I regretted that I hadn't valued their talents and paid more attention to training them. I racked my brains trying to think of a way of making up for it. I asked my staff to recommend good cooks if they knew any. They would be paid well and we would arrange cars for those who needed them.

But alas, this idea was to bring back Zhu Ziye.

A Diner Gives Lessons

I don't know who first brought Zhu's name up, but everybody supported the idea. I was thoroughly surprised that a glutton could be so famous.

I suppose there was every good reason for Zhu to give lectures. He's been making the rounds of Suzhou restaurants from 1938 to 1958, and before that had frequented Shanghai restaurants too. Though he had nothing to eat in the three lean years, he'd never stopped reading about food. I heard that he wrote a cookbook druing that time. Although during the "cultural revolution" he'd confessed to anything put to him, he'd kept his mouth shut about his manuscript, wrapped it in plastic and buried it in a rockery. This action

"就是锅巴汤，你们的菜单上天天有。有些名菜你们应该知道，但是不能入菜单，大量供应有困难。比如说鲃肺汤，那是用鲃鱼的肺做的。鲃鱼很小，肺也只有蚕豆瓣那么大，到哪里去找大量的鲃鱼呢？其实那鲃肺也没有什么吃头，主要是靠高汤、辅料，还得多放点味精在里面。鲃肺汤所以出名，那是因为国民党的元老于右任到木渎的石家饭店吃了一顿，吃后写了一首诗，诗中有一句，叫'多谢石家鲃肺汤'。从此石家饭店出了名，鲃肺汤也有了名气。有些名菜一半儿是靠怪，一半儿是靠吹。"

我向椅背上一靠，深深地透了口气。

"你们的缺点也不少，为什么把活鱼隔夜杀好放在冰箱里？为什么把青菜堆在太阳里？饭店里的东西除掉酒以外，其余的都得讲究新鲜。过去有一只菜叫活炒鸡丁，从杀鸡到上菜只有三分多钟，那盆子里的鸡丁好像还在动哩！"

包坤年举手发言了："杨师傅，请你说说，这么快都有什么秘密？"

"也没有什么秘密，主要手脚快，事先做好一切准备，乘鸡血还未沥干时便向开水里一蘸，把鸡胸上的毛一抹，剜下两块鸡脯便下锅，其它什么也不管。这……这主要是供表演用的，也可以为厨师增加点名气。"

杨中宝为我们讲了两个多钟头，又到厨房里去实地操作表演；老人的兴致又高，不肯休息，回家后便犯老病，睡了十多天。

alone put him on a par with scientists, theoreticians and men of letters. Bao put it well: "He could have taught us a thing or two just by telling us what he's eaten all his life." I agreed to do it. I couldn't put my own likes and dislikes above my work any more. At any rate, I hadn't seen him for the last ten years. In ten years a man could become a scholar. But I didn't go and get him myself. Bao went in a taxi. At 68, Zhu was qualified to be picked up in a taxi. Bao said he wanted to take the opportunity to apologize to Zhu and Kong for his past behaviour. I thought it was better for him to make his own apology. People should do their own apologizing. I couldn't take on everything.

I presided over Zhu's first talk. Remembering his fantasies about pumpkins, I wondered what other ideas had occurred to him during the last ten years.

Zhu wasn't a good speaker, particularly in fornt of an audience. He stuttered and trembled. But when it came to food, he was a different man. He was eloquent, interesting. As soon as he got on stage he asked an interesting question.

"Comrades, who can tell me what is the most difficult thing about cooking?"

The audience's interest was aroused, and they began to make guesses.

"Choosing the ingredients."

"Chopping."

"The actual cooking."

Zhu shook his head. "No, you're all wrong. It's the sim-

我本来想打报告，把杨中宝请回来当技术指导，补足他的原工资，外加讲课津贴。现在再也不敢惊动他了，让老人安度晚年。青年人的学习热情很高，不肯罢休，说是刚刚听出点味道来，怎么能停下呢！这话很对，我过去没有重视人材，更没有想到培养的问题，现在悔之未晚，得加倍努力！想来想去，想出了一个主意：出招贤榜！谁熟悉哪个烧菜的名手，都可以推荐，不管是在职的还是退休的，讲一课都是八块钱，年老体弱的人，可以叫出租汽车去接。

这一下可坏了，一张招贤榜又把个朱自冶引到了我的身边！

十　吃客传经

不知道是谁首先想起了朱自冶，一经宣扬以后人人都很同意。这使我十分吃惊，原来好吃也会有这么大的名气！

是的，请朱自冶来讲课的理由是很充分的。他从一九三八年开始便到苏州来吃馆子——这还没有把他在上海的“吃龄”计算在内，不间断地吃到了大跃进之前。三年困难之间虽然一度中断，但他从未停止在理论上的探讨，据外间流传，就是在那极其困难的条件下，他写成了一本食谱。“文化大革命”期间他什么都肯交代，唯有这份手稿却用塑料纸包好埋在假山的下面。此种行为的本身就可以跻身于科学家、理论家、文学家的行列，且不说他到底写了点什么东西。包坤年说得好：“只要他讲讲一生

plest yet the most difficult thing to do — the adding of salt."

They were all riveted. Nobody thought he'd mention something every little girl could do. When old ladies went to the well to wash rice they would call out to their granddaughters, "Put some salt in the pot for me, would you, dear?" Some of our old chefs nodded in agreement: this simplest yet most difficult thing required great skill.

Zhu elaborated, "Sour in the east, hot in the west, sweet in the south and salty in the north. People all believe that Suzhou dishes are sweet, but actually apart from dessert, Suzhou cuisine is very careful about salt, which enhances all tastes. A fish lung without salt is tasteless. Salt makes the fish lung tasty, ham more savoury, the water shield more slippery and the bamboo shoots crisp. It brings out all these tastes and yet vanishes itself. The right amount of salt is not salty: if there is too much you taste nothing but the saltiness. Then all the skill in the chopping and careful cooking is wasted."

I was astonished that he could be so convincing.

He went on, "The quantity of salt varies with the people and the time. The first few dishes of a banquet should have more salt because the diner's body needs it and his palate is still not ready. The dishes that follow should have less and less salt. The soup that comes at the end of a forty-course meal should have no salt at all and people will appreciate it all the same, because after so much wine and food, the body is already saturated with salt and people need water. And

都吃了哪些名菜，就可以使我们大开眼界！”我同意了。我再也不能把个人的好恶带到工作里。何况我不见朱自冶已经整整十年，十年寒窗还能中状元，你怎么能把个朱自冶看死呢？可是我没有亲自登门求教，是包坤年叫了一部出租汽车去的。朱自冶六十八岁，符合我所说的坐车条件。包坤年说他想借此机会去向朱自冶和孔碧霞检讨，过去的事情是一时昏了头。我想也对，这个检讨由他去做比较适宜，谁欠的帐谁还，我也不能包揽。

朱自冶讲课的那一天，也是我主持会议。他的吃经我已经听过一些了，特别是关于南瓜盅，我的印象是很深的，我要听听这些年他到底有了哪些发展。

朱自冶并不是很会讲话的人，尤其是到了台上，他总是急急巴巴，抖抖合合的。讲起吃来可大不相同了！滔滔不绝，而且方法新颖。他一登台便向听众提出一个问题：

“同志们，谁能回答，做菜哪一点最难？”

会场活跃，人们开始猜谜了：

“选料。”

“刀功。”

“火候。”

朱自冶一一摇头：“不对，都不对，是一个最最简单而又最最复杂的问题——放盐。”

人们兴致勃勃了，谁也没有料到这位吃家竟然讲起了连一个小女孩都会做的事体。老太太烧菜的时候，常常在井边上，一面淘米一面喊她的孙女儿：“阿毛，替我向锅子里放点盐。”

water with a little MSG is delicious."

Zhu interspersed his talk with interesting anecdotes too. "Not putting salt in soup was an accidental discovery by a famous chef. The dinner had been going on from 6 p.m. to midnight and he was so tired he had forgotten to add salt. When he realized and hurried into the dining hall with it, people had already finished the soup and commented that it was the best course of the evening."

He went on non-stop for two whole hours impressing the audience with an extensive knowledge which, like an iceberg, was only showing its tip. He ended to applause and returned to his seat with his chest all puffed up. His ruddy face and silvery hair gave him an air of solemnity. Bao picked his way through the audience and walked up to grasp his hand. "That was excellent, Mr Zhu. I tried to take notes but I missed a lot. Could you repeat what you said if I bring a tape recorder to your home?"

"Well...yes, but please come after three in the afternoon. I take a nap at noon."

"Certainly. I won't trouble you to repeat your talks in future; I'll just record them right away. Then I'll transcribe them from the recording."

"That's not necessary. I just talk off the cuff."

"It's very valuable information. It would be a pity if it wasn't taken down."

"Well, let me read the manuscript when you've done it."

"Of course, I'd like you to have a look at it."

世界上最复杂和最简单的事情都有最大的学问，何况我们的几个老厨师都在频频点头，觉得是说在点子上面。

朱自冶进一步发挥了："东酸西辣，南甜北咸，人家只知道苏州菜都是甜的，实在是个天大的误会。苏州菜除掉甜菜之外，最讲究的便是放盐。盐能吊百味，如果在鲃肺汤中忘记了放盐，那就是淡而无味，即什么味道也没有。盐一放，来了，鲃肺鲜、火腿香、莼菜滑、笋片脆。盐把百味吊出之后，它本身就隐而不见，从来也没有人在咸淡适中的菜里吃出盐味，除非你是把盐多放了，这时候只有一种味：咸。完了，什么刀功、选料、火候，一切都是白费！"

我听了大为惊讶，这朱自冶确实有点道理！

朱自冶的道理还在向前发展："这放盐也不是一成不变的，要因人、因时而变。一桌酒席摆开，开头的几只菜要偏咸，淡了就要失败。为啥，因为人们刚刚开始吃，嘴巴淡，体内需要盐。以后的一只只菜上来，就要逐步地淡下去，如果这桌酒席有四十个菜的话，那最后的一只汤简直就不能放盐，大家一喝，照样喊鲜。因为那么多的酒和菜都已吃了下去，身体内的盐分已经达到了饱和点，这时候最需的是水，水里还放了味精，当然鲜！"

朱自冶不仅是从科学上和理论上加以阐述，还旁插了许多有趣的情节。说那最后的一只汤简直不能放盐，是一个有名的厨师在失手中发现的。那一顿饭从晚上六点吃到十二点，

Since he had after all been to a private university, Zhu did have something of a professorial air. Bao always liked to collect material, so I asked Zhu to continue his talks over the next few weeks.

Zhu gave three talks. Bao borrowed a four-speaker tape recorder and recorded everything he said. In his second talk, people began to get a little impatient. He went on and on about the importance of adding salt but never told people how to do it. The chefs weren't amateurs like me, they knew the importance of salt. They wanted to gain Zhu's consummate skill of using salt. But unlike Yang, Zhu didn't go to the kitchen to demonstrate. The third time, he began to talk about when and with whom he had a feast on a boat in a lake; how refined the feast of crabs was that he'd had one Double Ninth Festival when they'd used sixty-four solid silver pieces of cutlery to eat them with. And he kept harping on about the dishes today being a far cry from those in the past. I remember how he'd belittled the emperors' palate, but now he was praising the imperial food of the Qing dynasty to the skies. I took it in stride. Food wasn't like works of art, the older the better. A primitive mural found in a cave was precious, but was the ox roasted in a cave in ancient times the best too? The chefs began to yawn and some of them left for home, saying they were fed up with his bragging. In his fourth talk he even started on about singsong girls, flower girls and actors who performed at banquets.

厨师做汤的时候打瞌睆，忘了放盐，等他发觉以后拿了盐奔进店堂时，人们已经把汤喝光，一致称赞：在所有的菜中汤是第一！

整整的两个小时，朱自冶没有停歇，使人感到他的学识渊博，像冰山刚刚露了点头。他在掌声中走下台来，挺胸凸肚，红光满面，满头的白发泛着银光，更增加某种庄重的气息。包坤年从人群中挤上去，紧紧地拉住了朱自冶的手："朱老，你讲得太好了，我都作了记录，只是记录得不全面，我想带只录音机到府上去拜访，请你再讲一遍。"

"这个嘛……可以，不过最好请你在下午三点以后，我吃了饭得睡一会。"

"当然当然，你以后的报告我一定当场录下来，不再麻烦你。我想根据录音再加整理。"

"不必了吧，我是随便讲讲的。"

"哪里，你的讲话太珍贵了，不留下来太可惜！"

"好吧，整理好给我看看。"

"一定，一定要请你过目的。"

朱自冶到底在野鸡大学里混过，老来颇有点教授风度；包坤年一贯重视收集材料，热情也是可掬的；我也向朱自冶发出邀请，请他下个星期继续讲下去。

朱自冶连续为我们讲了三课，包坤年借来一只四喇叭，把朱自冶的讲话全部录下。可惜的是讲到第二课大家便有点着急，讲了半天的盐，这盐怎么还没有放下去呢！厨师们不像我那么外行，放盐的重要性他们是知道的；他们

I decided to put a stop to it. Bao protested, saying that history would hold me responsible if I didn't preserve such precious material.

The mention of history left me cold. If Zhou disclosed something valuable in his fututre talks or if he had already done so and we'd missed it, then I'd take the responsibility. Yet I refused to be cornered now, having learned the trick of not committing myself first. I would wait and see and only speak when things were clear; then I could always be in the right.

"How about this? Zhu needn't give his talks any more because no one wants to listen. You can go on with collecting material since you've already started. I'll provide you with the things you need."

Bao was delighted. "Let's buy a four-speaker recorder."

"No. I'd have to get permission for that. But you can buy some cassettes on our propaganda fee. Don't get all foreign ones only, get some of our Chinese-made ones too."

He was very pleased. "Thank you for your trust in me, Manager Gao. I'll do my best to do a good job."

So the lectures were settled that way. We paid Zhu his fee and the taxi expenses. But the matter was not quite finished. Bao kept on buying cassettes; every two weeks he bought a couple more. When I signed his receipt one day, I inquired, "When will this mission end?"

"My dear manager, it's become a big thing now. I've made contacts for Zhu to give talks at a lot of places, so it's

更想知道朱自冶在放盐上有哪些绝技。朱自冶不像杨中宝，他只肯在台上讲，不肯到厨房里去表演。讲到第三课的时候便开始说故事了，说是哪一年和哪几个人去游石湖，吃了一顿船菜如何精美；哪一年重阳节吃螃蟹，光是那剔螃蟹的工具便有六十四件，全是银子做的。而且讲来讲去只有一个观点，现在的菜和过去不能比，他以前说皇帝不懂吃，现在又说清朝是如何的。我当然不能说他是宣扬今不如昔，却也产生了一点怀疑，饭菜不比文物，文物是越古的越值钱。如果在山洞里发现了一幅原始社会的壁画，哪，了不起！可那山洞里的烤野牛是否也算是最好吃的！厨师们打哈欠了，有的干脆回家去睡觉，说是不听他吹牛。讲到第四课味道就不正了，把什么大姑娘唱小曲儿，卖白兰花，叫堂会等等都夹在菜里面。

我决定叫暂停，可那包坤年有意见，说是这样珍贵的材料如果不及时抢救，那是要对历史负责的！

我听到对历史负责就发怵，心里就没有个底。很难说啊，万一那朱自冶还有许多货真价实的东西没有讲出来，或者说他已经讲出来的东西我们并不理解，那倒真是要负责的！好在这一类的难题现在已经难不倒我了，我也学会了一套，即遇事拿不准时，千万不能说死，这里打一个坝，那里要留一个口，让他走着我瞧着，到时候再说话，总归是我对。

“这样吧，朱自冶的报告必须暂停，因为人们已经听不下去。抢救材料的事情当然不能停，反正你已经开始了，那就由你负责到底，我

not going to end. Nor do we want it to. We've decided to set up a Culinary Society, so that we can have a proper name when we make contacts. Zhu will be president, I'm vice-president. You're one of the sponsors too. Since you're so busy we thought of asking you to be an honorary councillor."

"What?" My head was spinning. Bao seemed to be organizing another attack force the way he had in the "cultural revolution."

"I can't," I protested. "I don't know anything about cuisine."

"You don't have to, just give us your support."

"No, we don't have that much money to throw around."

Bao laughed. "Manager, you're such a.... You don't need money, we can make money by selling mimeographed notes of his lectures. The street stalls sell sewing books at a hundred percent profit. Cookbooks will sell well too. Besides, we can sell them at Zhu's talks for people to buy with their office propaganda funds."

I had to hand it to Bao; he was a much better businessman than I was. I'd never thought of tapping the propaganda fund, which of course was much easier than taking private money. I had no right to forbid them and could only give them a warning.

"You mustn't have things like singsong girls in your notes."

"We won't. I'll do the actual writing, all purely academic.

可以提供一定的条件。”

包坤年雀跃了:“买个四喇叭!”

“四刺叭不能买,那是属于集团购买力,要上面批。录音磁带你可以买,宣传费用中可以报销,也不要全买TDK,买点儿国产的。”

包坤年十分满意:“高经理,谢谢你的信任,我一定把这个任务好好地完成。”

讲课就这样结束了,朱自冶前后讲了三课,三八二十四,外加出租汽车费。可是事情并没有结束,另外的一个口子还开着哩,那录音磁带不停地向外流。

包坤年每隔一个星期便要报销两盒磁带,而且全是TDK,我在批发票的时候便问他:“你的任务什么时候才能结束呢?”

包坤年神气活现:“啊呀经理,现在的事情闹大了,到处都来请朱自冶作报告,而且都是找我联系,不会有结束的时候。我们也不想结束,决定成立一个烹饪学学会,对外联络可以有个正式的名义。朱自冶当会长,我当副会长,你也是发起人之一。考虑到你的工作忙,所以请你当理事长,挂挂名的。”

“啊!”我的脑袋嗡了一下,立刻产生了一种条件反射,那包坤年又成立战斗队!

“不不,我不能参加,我对烹饪学是一窍不通。”

“不需要你通,表示赞助而已。”

“不不,我赞助不起,我们没有那么多的宣传费,当年请张幻尔吃顿饭,也不过花了一盘磁带的钱。”

Nothing about love."

I smiled and signed his bill. "Remember, next time buy domestically-made ones."

"Don't worry, there won't be a next time." He waved the bill. "We're going to buy a four-speaker recorder and a calculator."

I don't take Bao seriously. They were dreaming. Bao's cooking skills and Zhu's theories about salt didn't warrant research. Bao liked to follow the fashion, he'd turn back after a while.

But I was a bit simple; I underestimated Bao's ability. A good cook he wasn't, but he was an old hand at manoeuvring and gauging situations. Well-known restaurants were gathering places for all sorts of people, particularly well-known ones. You could set up relations by being friendly, giving good service, helping people make orders and reserving seats for them. You could get to know the younger generation if not the older one, and the young could influence their parents. Bao had helped them organize receptions for their sons' and daughters' weddings or get-togethers with old friends. They didn't mind spending money but they just couldn't cook well. Although Bao was no expert, he could get skilful cooks for them. Good cooking, Zhu's boasting and Bao's arrangements would doubtless make the banquets a success. They would explain the aim of their culinary society at these parties and get support. A culinary society which laid sumptuous dinners right before your eyes was more likely to get support than a nutritional society,

包坤年笑了："经理呀，你也真是……赞助不等于要钱，钱我们有办法，可以印讲义。你看地摊上卖的《缝纫大全》，一本一块多，成本才几毛钱？穿的有人要，吃的还愁没有生意！何况我们可以乘做报告的时候往下发，用不着私人掏腰包，人家也有宣传费。"

我看着包坤年直翻眼，佩服。他实在比我还会做生意，我只想到掏私人的腰包，没想到要挖公家的宣传费。可以预料，那比掏私人的腰包更容易。我无权反对他们这样做，只好提一点忠告式的意见：

"讲义也不能瞎编呀，不能把那些大姑娘唱小曲儿等等的东西也编进去。"

"不不，讲义是我执笔的，它和小说不同，全谈学术，牵不到男女关系。"

我笑笑，在发票上签了个名："拿去吧，下次请买国产的。"

包坤年拎起发票抖了抖："放心吧，下次用不着你批了，我们还要买四喇叭，买计算机！"

说实在，我没有把包坤年的话全当真的，他们想得起劲罢了，成立个学会谈何容易！就凭包坤年这点儿烧菜的本领，再加上朱自冶讲放盐，又有多少学术可以研究呢，弄不成的。包坤年欢喜赶时髦，赶那么一阵子就要回头。

我想得太简单了，过分低估了包坤年的活动能力。不错，包坤年在烧菜方面的本领还没有学到家，可是他在估量形势，运用关系方面却很老练。饭店是个公共场所，什么人都有；有名的饭店当然会有有名的人物前来光顾，只要

which was difficult to grasp though it might keep one fit and healthy. The word "society" had its appeal. Anti-academicism had been crushed and now everyone knew a little learning was better than no learning, so you wouldn't be in the wrong by supporting a society. Even if it was a mistake, it was still an academic problem to be thrashed out. And the more you discuss and debate something, the more famous that something becomes.

Zhu's fame grew. He was said to be an expert who had written a book during the "cultural revolution" which had brought manager so-and-so to his knees. This manager had sent a taxi to get him to give lectures and offered him 200 yuan a month to be an adviser, but Zhu had declined.

News of Bao's activities and Zhu's growing reputation reached my ears. "Watch first and make comments only when the time is ripe." Now the time was ripe, yet I had nothing to say. I couldn't say Zhu was just boasting and that people shouldn't pay any attention to him. What was the harm in listening to theories of adding salt? Nor could I claim Zhu had been a glutton all his life and would never change.... That would sound more like a compliment, since people who want to achieve something should devote their entire life to their pursuit. There was nothing I could say about Bao either. I couldn't say he was opening an underground restaurant, nor was he asking me to sign his bills any more. I would only be picking up a rock to drop on my own feet. Some people drop that rock as soon as they pick it up, but

主动热情，多加照顾，帮着订菜订座，那关系便可以搭上去。老的搭不上便搭小的，通过小的也可以牵动老的，包坤年便可由此而登堂入室，看准时机，帮助人家操办家庭宴会。儿女婚事，老友相聚，用得着酒席的地方很多，花几个钱也不在乎，唯一困难的是缺少技术与劳力。包坤年精力充沛，技术虽然不太好，但他能请动技术很好的老师傅。老师傅会烧，朱自冶会吹，包坤年能跑腿，酒席价廉物美，包你满意。乘人家吃得高兴时，他们便宣传烹饪学学会的宗旨，请求赞助。如果他们是成立营养学学会的话，赞助的人可能不多，营养学虽然可以防病健身，延年益寿，但是很难懂，而且也不如烹饪学实惠，烹饪学是看得见摸得着的，硬是有一桌丰美的筵席放在你的面前！“学会”二字也很有吸引力，反动学术权威早已打倒了，现在人人都知道，任何学术总比不学无术好，赞助学术不会犯错误，即使错了，学术问题也是可以讨论的，讨论得越多越有名气！

朱自冶的名气越来越大了：一个老专家，在十年浩劫中写了一本书，某某经理看了佩服得五体投地，用小汽车接他去做报告，出两百块工资请他当顾问，他不去……

包坤年在外面活动的风声，朱自冶那越来越大的名声，呼呼地吹到我的耳朵里。“让他走着我瞧着，到时候再发表意见。”现在时候已经到了，我也无话可说了。我不能说朱自冶讲课是吹牛，大家别去听，听一次讲放盐还是可以的。我也不能揭朱自冶的老底，说他一贯好吃，

others drop it dozens of years later.

A Sumptuous Dinner

Not long after that, my old friend A'er came to see me. Even though we were no longer neighbours, we often called on each other. The day I moved into my new place, his whole family came, even his father. "Well, congratulations," he said to my mother. "Now you'll never have to worry about being thrown out by a landlord any more." My mother, who was getting on now, didn't reply and just wiped away tears. A'er often dropped in for a chat, a cigarette or a cup of tea. This was the first time he'd looked me up in the restaurant.

He waved to catch my attention. "I wouldn't have bothered you today, only I wanted to ask you a favour."

"What is it?"

"My eldest son is getting married this Sunday. I tried to book two tables for the reception but was told I'd have to wait three weeks. Can you help me?"

That put me on the spot. "So you do this too. Other people give banquets in restaurants to show off, save themselves trouble at home and collect gifts. Is that what you're up to? How much should I give?"

"Come on, I'm not inviting many people. The bride and bridegroom's family and yours, less than twenty altogether."

死不改悔……正中，一个人要做出点学问来，必须终身不渝，坚持到底！对于包坤年我也不好说什么，我不能说他是开地下饭店，他再也不找我在发票上签字。唉，一切实用主义的工作方法都是自搬石头自砸脚，有的随搬随砸，有的从搬到砸要隔几十年！

十一　口福不浅

过了不久，我的老朋友阿二到店里来找我。我们两个人虽然不再住在一条巷子里，可是两家人家却经常来往。当我搬进新大楼的时候，他们一家都来道喜。连阿二的爸爸也由孙子们搀扶着爬上楼。他对我的妈妈说："恭喜你呀老嫂子，你活了一生一世，从今以后再也不必担心房东会把你赶出去！"我的妈妈老迈了，回不出话来，只是擦眼泪。阿二更是经常到我家来，说说老话，坐一坐。有时候觉得老话也重复得太多了，便抽烟喝茶，无言相对，好像也是一种享受。他直接到店里来找我，这还是第一次。

阿二见了我把手一举："无事不登三宝殿，有件事情求求你。"

"什么事？"

"我家大男要结婚了，就在这个星期天。我想到你们店里订两桌酒席，可你们要排到三个星期之后！经理呀，能不能帮帮忙呢？"

我为难了："哎呀，你何必来凑这种热闹，人家在饭店里摆酒是图排场，收人情，省事

"You could have a party at home by putting a couple of tables in your courtyard. Look at this place; it's so noisy you couldn't even hear people's congratulations. Once it gets near closing time, the staff are so eager to knock off they stand next to you holding brooms. How could you possibly enjoy your meal?"

"Listen to you! Running down your own restaurant." "It's not that; our food's not bad. We get a pile of complimentary letters every month. But I just always feel a party at home is nicer. Besides, we have a regulation that no employee may sit down at a friend's table. Should I just stand beside you and watch you eat?"

"Of course not; this time I want to do something special for you. If you hadn't persuaded me to dig ditches, my life would have been quite different."

"Good. Then have a party at home. I'll get you a good chef, first-rate."

"There's no need," A'er laughed. "We've got a big family and everyone can do something. Times have changed; everyone's got a couple of specialities."

"Splendid, everybody can cook one dish. I'll do the soup."

A'er waved his hand. "Thanks, but don't bother. I know how to do it. You just come over early; I'll be expecting you."

I was really looking forward to the wedding reception. I'd brought trouble to this household once. A'er's father had to

情。你也准备收人情吗，我应当送几十块呢？”

“去，我也不准备大请客。你家、我家、亲家，还有几个小朋友，总共不到二十人。”

“那好，两桌酒席你家摆不下吗，不能摆在天井里吗？你到店堂里去看看，闹哄哄的，想说几句高兴的话谁也听不见；到时候服务员要下班，拿着扫帚站在旁边，你能吃得安逸？”

“啧啧，哪有卖瓜的说瓜苦的。”

“瓜倒不苦，不是吹的，现在的几只菜都不推扳，表扬信收到了一大堆，可我总觉不如家宴随便。还有一个问题不好解决，我们有店规，凡属本店的工作人员，一律不得在本店与熟人同席，以免吃客们产生误会。你叫我怎么办，站在边上看！”

“嗬，那不能。这一次我要好好地请你喝两杯，当年如果不是你动员我参加失业登记，今天的情况也许就是两样的。”

“行，自家办。我可以帮助你请个好厨师，呱呱叫的手艺。”

阿二笑了：“那倒不必，我们家人手多，个个能动手。鸟枪换炮啦，伙计，人人都有一两样拿手菜哩！”

“更好，一人烧一只，我烧最后的一只汤。”

阿二拱拱手：“免了，你的汤我已经领教过了。星期天晚上早点来，等你。”

我的心里喜滋滋的，真的等着这桌酒席。我给他家惹过麻烦，害得阿二的爸爸摆葱姜摊头；也就是在那个天井里，阿二叫我去拉过南瓜，如今在那里摆上两桌酒啊！不吃也美！

正当我美的时候，包坤年蹦跳着进来了，

sell ginger and onions because of me. Now, the same courtyard where A'er had promised to give me those pumpkins would hold two tables of food. I felt thoroughly happy.

Just then Bao raced in, looking really pleased. When everyone was happy then the world became a better place.

"Here, manager," Bao cried and thrust a red invitation inscribed with gold characters into my hand. I read, "In celebration of the establishment of the Culinary Society, prominent figures from all walks of life are invited to luncheon on Sunday the twenty-eighth at No. 54, X X Lane." Another dinner party. I quickly said without thinking, "Sorry, I've got an appointment on Sunday. I'm going to a wedding."

Bao scratched his head. "What time?"

"Six o'clock." Another thoughtless answer.

"Excellent. Our luncheon is at noon; there's no conflict."

I looked at the card again. Yes, it said twelve noon. I had to make myself clear. "I can't come. I'm not a member of your society and I'm no sort of prominent figure. It would be inappropiate for me to come."

"My dear manager, your refusal to be our councillor has helped a lot. The councillor's seat is still vacant. Otherwise we would have split up quarreling long ago."

So my not joining them was an even greater support. How subtle these things were.

"Please come. Everyone's coming; it wouldn't be right if you didn't. Besides, it's not a meeting where you'd have to

看样子他也很美；我美他也美，这个世界才会变得更美！

包坤年高高地叫了一声："经理，给！"把一张印着金字的大红请柬塞到了我手里。我把请帖翻过来一看："为庆祝烹饪学学会成立，特订于二十八日中午（星期日）假座××巷五十四号举行便宴招待各界人士，务请大驾光临。"好，又是一顿酒席来了！我对这桌酒席的反应很快，不假思索地便说了出来："抱歉，我星期天有个约会，要到人家吃喜酒去。"说着便把请帖向桌上一丢。

包坤年搔搔头皮："你那是什么时候？"

"晚上六点。"我又不假思索地说了出来。

"好极了，不冲突，我们是中午十二点。"

我再把请帖拿起来看看，果然不错，中午二字明明白白地印在那里。我只好摆观点了："不行，我没有参加你们的学会，也算不了是哪一界的人士，去是不合适的。"

"经理呀，正是因为你不肯当理事长，才使得我们的工作进行得十分顺利，空出一个理事长的位子来，解决了大问题！要不然的话，我们早就吵散啦，学会到今天也不能成立！"

"噢！"原来如此，参加是一种赞助，不参加还是更大的赞助！事物的因果关系实在微妙之极！

"去吧经理，某某某都去了，你不去是不像话的。又不是开大会，也不要你发言，纯粹是吃，一顿美餐，不去很可惜。"

"我不大欢喜吃。"

make a speech. It's just to eat. It would be a shame not to eat such good food."

"I don't care for good food."

"You don't have to eat that much. It would be an eye-opener and a kind of vocational study for you too. To tell you the truth, it's going to be something very, very special. Zhu will give the directions and Kong will be cooking. We've spent four days making preparations. Kong insisted on no more than eight people. We had to do a lot of persuading before she'd agree to use a round table which could seat ten people, including you."

I wavered. Yang had praised Kong's cooking to the skies after eating there. I still didn't know what he'd had that day. I'd regret it all my life if I lost this chance. Besides, I had already given them my support whether I was president or not. If I left a seat vacant once again, what would happen?

"All right, I'll go."

"Fine, then it's decided. I won't come to pick you up. You know No. 54 well."

"I certainly do. I could find it with my eyes closed."

When I'd been in secondary school I went by No. 54 every day and saw the shining rickshaws parked outside the door. Occasionally a Ford would drive up and squeeze the pedestrians against the sides of the lane. The black lacquer door, invariably closed, had a slit and a burglar eye. The slit was a letter box, and the eye enabled those inside to see out but

“那就少吃点，见识见识，对你来说也是一种业务学习。老实告诉你吧，这一桌酒席是百年难遇。朱自冶指挥，孔碧霞动手，我们几个人已经忙了四天。所有的理事都想参加，挤不进来大有意见。没有办法，孔碧霞有规矩，最多不得超过八人，再三商量才同意改用圆台面，连你十个。”

包坤年的话使我动摇了。当年杨中宝到孔碧霞家去吃饭，只听说吃得好上天，却一直不知道究竟吃了些什么东西。如今有了机会，不去见识一下是会终身遗憾的。何况我参加不参加都是赞助，如果再空出一个位子来，还不知道会引出什么后果哩！

“好吧，我去。”

“一言为定，不来接你了，五十四号你是熟悉的。”

“太熟悉了，我闭上眼睛也能摸到。”

五十四号我是很熟悉，读中学的时候我每天都要从那里经过，常常看见有许多油光锃亮的黄包车停在门口，偶尔还有一辆福特牌的小轿车驶过来，把巷子里的行人挤得纷纷贴上墙头。那两扇黑漆的大门终日紧闭着，门上有一条缝，一个眼。缝里投信件，眼里装有玻璃，据说这是一种窥视镜，里面能看清外面，外面看不见里面，叫花子是敲不开门的。那时候沿门求乞的人很多，差不多的人家都装有这种东西。我从来不知道那门里是什么样子，只是看见那高高的围墙上长满了爬墙虎，每到秋天便飘送出桂花的香气。如今的桂子又飘香了，我

not vice versa. In those days there were a lot of beggars and families had such devices to keep them away. I never saw inside the tall courtyard wall overgrown with creepers, but the scent of osmanthus wafted out in autumn. Now the osmanthus were in bloom again and I had come to No. 54 not as a boy, but as a prominent member of society.

Inside the opened lacquer door stood a beautiful girl in high heels, sleek trousers and a silvery blouse with white ruffles at the throat and a drawstring waist. She walked up to me smiling. I held out my invitation card, but she bowed with a smile and invited me in. "Manager Gao is here, mother," she cried.

So this was Kong's daughter by the politician and professor. Yes, she would have grown up by now; my own daughter was already a mother. I turned to look at her. She was the very image of Kong, who must have been just as beautiful when she was young.

Kong walked along the gravel path lined with flowers. I could hardly recognize her; she seemed to have given her own face to her daughter while turning into a mature lady herself. She had put on weight and looked much younger than when she had stood in front of the neighbourhood committee. She wore her hair piled up in a pompadour which gave her more height and disguised her plumpness. Her dress was tasteful; time had taught her the art of dressing. A young girl was beautiful no matter what she wore and how she was made up, but the dress of an older woman should

从一个孩子变成了“各界人士”，又到了五十四号的门前。

那两扇黑漆斑驳的大门敞开着，有一位年轻而漂亮的妇女站在门里面。她的穿着很入时，高跟皮鞋，直筒裤，银灰色的衬衫镶着两排洁白的蝴蝶边，衬衫也是束腰的。她笑嘻嘻地迎了上来，我以为是收入场券的，连忙把请柬掏出来给她看。她掩嘴，深深一鞠躬，左手向前一伸：“请进。”跟着便高声地叫喊：“妈妈，高经理来啦！”

噢……对了，她就是孔碧霞的女儿，是那个政客兼教授留下来的。姑娘也应该有这么大了，连我的女儿都有了孩子。我再回过头来看看她，活像孔碧霞，孔碧霞年轻的时候，也该是一代风流！

孔碧霞从那条铺着石子的花径上走过来了。我抬头一看，简直不认识了，她好像已经把原来的脸型留给了女儿，自己变成了一个半老的贵妇。现在不会有人喊她干瘪老阿飞了，她也发了胖，胖得丰满圆润，比站在居委会门前请罪时年轻得多。她的头发向上反梳着，在后脑上高高隆起。这种高，正好抵消了因发胖而造成的横向发展，所以不会造成人们视觉上的错误，好像发了胖的女人都比以前矮了一点。她的衣着并不花哨，时间已经使她懂得了打扮的真谛；年轻而漂亮的人不管穿什么衣裳都好看，淡装浓抹都相宜。年老的人如果要打扮的话，主要是用衣着来表示某种风度和气质而

bring out her elegance and character. Her simple clothing suited her age and figure and her blue jacket was well tailored and of good quality.

Kong was extremely friendly towards me. People as meticulous as she was always remembered the small things.

"I was afraid you might not come, Manager Gao. You've got on in years too; are you a grandfather now?"

"Yes, my daughter has a new baby."

"That's nice. Do come in, please, we're waiting for you."

I followed her through a quiet little garden. A stone bridge spanned a square pond on three sides of which were trees, flowers, bamboos and rocks. The bridge led to a big pavilion overlooking the water, which must have been the study of the politician professor. It was spacious and had a long row of French windows opening on to the pool. Looking in, I could see a large round table set in the eastern end, while the "prominent figures" were seated in the west.

Bao came across the bridge to meet me and introduce me to the important people. Among them were two of Zhu's old banquet companions for whom I'd bought food in years gone by. One was a former superior of mine, whose speeches I had listened to when I was a young man. The other three I didn't recognize. One was very quiet; the other two were very talkative and seemed to be businessmen of some kind. Dressed in an old Western suit complete with an old tie tucked inside his vest, Zhu didn't look too bad. I didn't know which corner of the trunk he'd dragged the suit out of

已。所以孔碧霞的衣着很素净，一件普通的蓝色西装外套，做工考究，质地高贵，和她的年龄、体型都很相配。

孔碧霞对我很热情，像她这样精细的人，很难忘记细小的事情。

“高经理呀，就怕你不来呐。唷，也老了，当阿爹了吧？”

“没有，刚当上外公。”

“好，都是一样的。快请进，就等你开席。”

我跟着孔碧霞往前走，一个幽雅而紧凑的庭院展现在面前。树木花草竹石都排列在一个半亩方塘的三边，一顶石桥穿过方塘，通向三间面水轩。在当年，这里可能是那位政客兼教授的书房，明亮宽敞，临水是一排落地的长窗。所有的长窗都大开着，可以看得清楚，大圆桌放在东首，各界人士暂时都坐在西头。

包坤年从石板桥上走过来了，把我向各界人士一一引见。其中有两位是朱自冶的老吃友，我当年替他们买过小吃的。有一位是我的老领导，我年轻时便听过他的报告。其余的三位我都不熟悉，一个沉默寡言，两个谈笑风生，谈吐间流露出一股市侩气。

朱自冶穿着一套旧西装，规规矩矩地系着一条旧领带，领带塞在西装马甲里。这套衣裳不知道是从哪个箱子的角落里翻出来的，散发着浓重的樟脑味，可是朱自冶穿着并不显得滑稽，反而使我肃然而有敬意。好熟悉，这种装束是在哪里见过的？对了，我在读高中的时候，老

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but it had a strong smell of mothballs. This kind of clothing was familiar to me, but from where? Oh, yes, in my secondary school days my teachers had divided off into two groups. Half dressed in dark blue long gowns and the other half in Western suits and leather shoes. My Chinesse language teachers were always seen in long gowns and my physics teachers were always in suits. Cuisine was a kind of science. A long gown would be too old-fashioned, an ordinary uniform had no particular impact and there was no particular reason to wear a brand-new Western suit. An old suit was just right. He was like an old scientist who had been overlooked for years and had suddenly been discovered by the world. This must have been Kong's handiwork, since Zhu had always been a careless dresser.

Zhu hadn't worn a Western suit for ages and seemed a little uncomfortable. He bumped into several chairs and then stuffed a mimeographed manuscript on cooking into my hands. Ill at ease, I sat in front of my former superior. Having worked with him for a period just after Liberation, I was under the impression that he was a sombre and strict person and did not approve of intellectuals. We "petty-bourgeois" elements were always very careful and disciplined in front of him. Meeting him in this setting, I was flustered and at a loss for words, so I slowly leafed through the mimeographed sheets.

"Young Gao."

"Yes."

师们的衣着基本上分为两大派。一派是长袍蓝衫，一派是西装革履。国文教员总是穿长袍，物理教师都是穿西装的。烹饪学属于科技，穿长袍蓝衫显得太陈旧，穿制服又没有特点，穿崭新的西装又显得没有根基，西装而是旧的，妙极！好像是一个潦倒多年的老科学家刚被重视，刚被发现！这一身打扮肯定是出于孔碧霞的大手笔，朱自冶穿衣裳一贯是很拆烂污的。

朱自冶多年不穿西装了，行动很不自然，碰碰撞撞地越过几张椅子，把一本烹饪学讲义塞到了我的手里。我拿着讲义在我的老领导的面前坐下，也觉得十分拘谨。解放初期当我还在工作队的时候，曾经和这位领导同志有过一段时间的接触，在我的印象中他是个不苟言笑，要求严格，对知识分子有点不以为然的人。我们那一伙"小资产"在他的面前都装得十分规矩而谨慎。今天在此种场合中相遇，还使我感到有点手足无措，最主要的是找不出话来说，只好把手中的讲义慢慢地翻阅。

"小高。"

"嗯。"

老领导叫了我一声小高以后，也发现我的年纪已经不小了，立即改了口："老高呀，你要好好地看看这本书，多向人家学习学习。"

"是，我一定好好地拜读。"

"现在不能靠外行领导内行了，要好好地钻进去。"

Then he discovered I was no longer young. "Er, Old Gao, you should read this material carefully and learn from the author."

"Yes, I shall certainly do that."

"Non-professionals cannot direct professionals any more; they really must know what they are doing."

"Definitely, I've made mistakes in the past."

"As long as people recognize their mistakes, there's time to correct them."

I nodded, continuing to finger the manuscript. Narrated by Zhu and written by Bao, it had nothing new in it and was only copied from a lot of other cookbooks. There were many mistakes, or maybe they were just printing mistakes. I looked up at Zhu, meaning to ask him a few questions, but he avoided my eyes and shooed us all to the other end of the room.

We each politely asked one another to go first and finally persuaded my former boss to take the lead.

The table dazzled us. The white drawnwork table cloth had been set with an exquisite dinner service: very thin porcelain with a semi-transparent design and a latticework blue rim which looked as if it would leak. There were no flowers on the table but the twelve cold dishes were just as colourful. The shrimp, ham, green pepper, beans and chicken were pretty in themselves. The beef and fish were decorated with all kinds of vegetables, red crabapples and green plums. Salted fish cooked with shrimp roe was usually

“是的，我在这方面过去犯过错误。”

“知道错误就好，现在还来得及。”

我点点头，继续把讲义翻下去，发现这本由朱自冶口述，包坤年整理的大作并不是什么新鲜的东西，是从几种常见的食谱中抄录而来的，而且错漏很多，不知道是抄错的还是印错的。我抬起头来看看朱自冶，想向他提出一点问题，可那朱自冶却避开我的目光，双手向前划着，好像赶鸭子似的请大家入席。

人们鱼贯而出，互相谦让，彬彬有礼，共推我的老领导走在前面。

人们来到东首，突然眼花缭乱，都被那摆好的席面惊呆了。洁白的抽纱台布上，放着一整套玲珑瓷的餐具，那玲珑瓷玲珑剔透，蓝边淡青中暗藏着半透明的花纹，好像是镂空的，又像会漏水，放射着晶莹的光辉。桌子上没有花，十二只冷盆就是十二朵鲜花，红黄蓝白，五彩缤纷。凤尾虾、南腿片，毛豆青菽、白斩鸡，这些菜的本身都是有颜色的。熏青鱼，五香牛肉，虾子鲞鱼等等颜色不太鲜艳，便用各色蔬果镶在周围，有鲜红的山楂，有碧绿的青梅。那虾子鲞鱼照理是不上酒席的，可是这种名贵的苏州特产已经多年不见，摆出来是很稀罕的。那孔碧霞也独具匠心，在虾子鲞鱼的周围配上了雪白的嫩藕片，一方面为了好看，一方面也因为虾子鲞鱼太咸，吃了藕片可以冲淡些。

十二朵鲜花围着一朵大月季，这月季是用勾针编结而成的，很可能是孔碧霞女儿的手

not good enough for banquets, but since it was a Suzhou speciality and had been unobtainable for many years, it was a rare treat. It was surrounded with white lotus strips partly as decoration and partly to take away the saltiness of the fish.

At the centre of the twelve colourful dishes was a large rose, crocheted perhaps by Kong's daughter, to be used as a mat for hot dishes later on. The entire table was like a large blooming lotus or a water lily or sunflower.

This astonishing sight was greeted by many "ohs" and "ahs".

Another criticism came before we even sat down. "Look at this, Gao, this is real skill. That restaurant of yours is nothing more than a noisy market."

I remained silent and just glanceed around. Outside, trees were swaying in the breeze and the reflections of the verandas shimmered in the water as the scent of blossoming osmanthus wafted in. Birds chirped in the garden, just as they had when the politician professor had sat in his studio....

Zhu again urged us to take our seats. He loosened his tie a little and made an impromptu speech.

"Gentlemen, please follow my instructions. There's a lot to knowing how to drink and eat. You mustn't wolf the food, especially at the beginning. Try a little of everything first. The best comes later, so you have to leave some room for it."

Everybody was in high spirits and laughed.

艺，等会儿各种热菜便放在花里面。一张大圆桌就像一朵巨大的花，像荷花，像睡莲，也像一盘向日葵。

人们从惊呆中醒过来了，发出惊讶的叹息：

“啊……”

“啧啧。”

还没有入席我就受到批评了：“老高，你看看，这才是学问呐；看你们那个饭店，乱糟糟的。”

我没有吭气，四面打量，见窗外树影婆娑，水光耀廊，一阵阵桂花的香气，庭院中有麻雀吱吱唧唧。想当年那位政客兼教授身坐书房……

朱自冶又把两手向前划着，邀请大家入席。同时把领带拉拉松，作即席讲说：

“诸位，今天请大家听我指挥，喝什么酒，吃什么菜，都是有学问的。请大家不要狼吞虎咽，特别是开始时不能多吃，每样尝一点；好戏还在后面，万望大家多留点儿肚皮……”

人们哈哈地笑起来了，心情是很愉快的。

“……吃，人人都会，可也有人食而不知其味，知味和知人都是很困难的，要靠多年的经验。等会儿我可以一一介绍，敬请批评指教。开席，拿酒杯。”

包坤年立即打开酒橱，拿出一套高脚玻璃杯，两瓶通化的葡萄酒。这一套朱自冶不说我

"Although everyone can eat, some people never really enjoy their food. It takes years of experience to learn to do that. I'll explain every dish to you in the hope that you'll give your comments freely. Now let's start; bring the wine glasses."

Bao opened a cupboard and took out a set of wine glasses and two bottles of port. Even without Zhu's explanation I knew one mustn't start with alcohol since it numbed the palate. But I liked alcohol. I'd learned to drink it during the lean years and could drink nothing weaker than 128 proof.

Bao poured the wine into the glasses, making them look intantly like beautiful red rubies.

As vice-president of the society Bao spoke briefly, not so long as to outshine Zhu of course. He raised his chopsticks and urged us, "Let's start, comrades, help yourselves...."

Ignoring Bao, Zhu stopped us, "No, no. You don't tuck into the cold dishes at a sumptuous dinner. They are just to fill the gap between courses so that you can keep on eating and drinking." Then he called out, "Serve the first course."

All eyes turned to the opposite side of the pool. Since ancient times, a gentleman always kept his distance from the kitchen.

I seemed to be watching a film: Kong's beautiful daughter made her way through the trees and bamboos to the bridge. Walking lightly with a tray in one hand, she and her reflection in the water floated toward us like a modern goddess from the Moon Palace. This beautiful scene, directed by that

也懂了，开始的时候不能喝白酒，以免舌辣口麻品不出味。可我就想喝白酒，我学会喝酒是在困难的时刻，没有六十四度不够味。

包坤年替大家斟满了酒，玻璃杯立刻变成了红宝石，殷红的颜色透出诱人的光辉。葡萄美酒夜光杯，那制作夜光杯的白玉之精也可能就是玻璃。

包坤年是副会长，斟完了酒总要讲几句的，为了要突出朱自冶，多讲了也不适宜，便举起筷子来带头："同志们请吧，请随意……"

朱自冶也不想为别人留点面子，煞有其事地制止："不不，丰盛的酒席不作兴一开始便扫冷盆，冷盆是小吃，是在两道菜的间隔之中随意吃点，免得停筷停杯。"说着便把头向窗外一伸，高喊："上菜啦！"

随着这一声叫喊，大家的眼睛都看住池塘的南面，自古君子远庖厨也，厨房和书房隔着一池碧水。

电影开幕了：孔碧霞的女儿，那个十分标致的姑娘手捧托盘，隐约出现在竹木之间，几隐几现便到了石板桥的桥头。她步态轻盈，婀娜多姿；桥上的人，水中的影，手中的盘，盘中的菜，一阵轻风似的向吃客们飘来，像现代仙女从月宫饭店中翩跹而来！该死的朱自冶竟然导演出这么个美妙的镜头，即使那托盘中是装的一盆窝窝头，你也会以为那窝窝头是来自仿膳，慈禧太后吃过的！

damn Zhu, would make any food in her tray, even if it were only coarse corn buns, seem like one of the Empress Dowager's feasts.

Of course the dish wasn't corn buns, but we were all astonished to see ten scarlet tomatoes when the plate lid was lifted. In Suzhou cuisine, the first course had always been a hot dish like stir-fried diced chicken, fish or shrimps. I'd never seen a meal start with tomatoes. Was this a dish or a fruit?

Zhu served them calmly, putting one on each plate. Then, like a magician, he took the top off his tomato, which was stuffed with stir-fried shrimps.

In high spirits, we all did the same.

Zhu explained, "Stir-fried shrimps are nothing special; you've all had them many times. Apart from improving the ingredients and way of cooking there haven't been any changes for many, many years. In recent years, people have started stir-frying shrimps with ketchup, but that tastes too Western. Shrimps in a tomato are both delicious and attractive, but please don't eat the bowl."

I had to admire Zhu. I'd been wanting to give my customers shrimps for a long time, but it had never occurred to me to stuff them in tomatoes. Autumn tomatoes were expensive, it would be a shame to throw them away. I would have liked to eat the tomato too.

The shrimps did taste better with a hint of sourness from the fresh tomato. Bighead Ding was right in saying that

托盘里当然不是窝窝头，盖钵揭开以后，使人十分惊奇，竟然是十只通红的番茄装在雪白的瓷盘里。我也愣住了，按照苏州菜的程式，开头应该是热炒。什么炒鸡丁，炒鱼片，炒虾仁等等的，从来没见过用西红柿开头！这西红柿是算菜还是算水果呢？

朱自冶故作镇静，把一只只的西红柿分进各人的碟子里，然后像变戏法似的叫一声"开！"立即揭去西红柿的上盖：清炒虾仁都装在番茄里！

人们兴趣盎然，纷纷揭盖。

朱自冶介绍了："一般的炒虾仁大家常吃，没啥稀奇。几十年来这炒虾仁除掉在选料与火候上下功夫以外，就再也没有其它的发展。近年来也有用番茄酱炒虾仁的，但那味道太浓，有西菜味。如今把虾仁装在番茄里面，不仅是好看，请大家自品。注意，番茄是只碗，不要连碗都吃下去。"

我只得佩服了，若干年来我也曾盼望着多给人们炒几盘虾仁，却没有想到把虾仁装在番茄里。秋天的番茄很值钱，丢掉多可惜，我真想连碗都吃下去。

唔，经朱自冶这么一说，倒是觉得这虾仁有点特别，于鲜美之中略带番茄的清香和酸味。丁大头说得不错，人的味觉都是差不多的，不像朱自冶所说有人会食而不知其味。差别在于有人吃得出却说不出，只能笼而统之地说：

people's palates were more or less the same, unlike Zhu who claimed that some people ate without tasting anything. The difference was that some people could describe it better than others. All some people could say was "good, superb," while Zhu's talent was in description and exaggeration. He had the ability to exaggerate in a way which could stimulate nerves which had been desensitized by excess.

The goddess floated back and forth across the bridge. I lost count of the number of dishes she brought except that a sweet followed each three. We'd had three deserts already: lotus seed broth, glutinous rice balls cooked with osmanthus and Gorgon fruit with lotus root starch.

I lost interest in Zhu's explanations. The beginning was too superb to be sustained. The later dishes, like hibiscus chicken slices, snowy chicken balls and chrysanthemum fish, could be found on the menu of my restaurant too.

The praises and exclamations were unceasing.

"How did you learn all this, Mr Zhu?" someone asked.

"It's difficult to say; from experience perhaps. You can't learn it from any teacher or book."

"You've had a happy and comfortable life, Mr Zhu. We're much too far beneath you."

"Not at all, we were all in the same boat during the bad years and the 'cultural revolution'."

"That's all in the past now; come on, let's eat."

"All right, when we reach communism we'll eat like this every day."

"啊，有一种说不出的好吃!"朱自冶的伟大就在于他能说得出来，虽然歪七歪八地有点近于吹牛，可吹牛也是说得出来的表现。在极力的享受和娱乐之中，不吹牛还很难使那近乎呆滞的神经奋起!

仙女在石板桥上来回地走着，各种热炒纷纷摆上台面。我记不清楚到底有多少，只知道三只炒菜之后必有一道甜食，甜食已经进了三道：剔心莲子羹，桂花小圆子，藕粉鸡头米。

朱自冶还在那里介绍，这种介绍已经引不起我的兴趣，他开头的一笔写得太精彩了，往后的情节却是一般的，什么芙蓉鸡片，雪花鸡球，菊花鱼等，我们店里的菜单上都有的。

人们的赞叹和颂扬也没有停歇：

"朱老，你的这些学问都是从哪里得来的?"

"很难说，这门学问一不能靠师承，二不能靠书本，全凭多年的积累。"

"朱老，你过了一世的快活日子，我们是望尘莫及。"

"哪里，彼此彼此，'文化大革命'和困难年也是不好过的。"

"算啦，那些事情都过去了，吃吃!"

"是呀，将来到了共产主义，我们大家天天都能吃上这样的菜!"

我听了肚里直泛泡，人人天天吃这样的菜，谁干活呢，机器人?也许可以，可是现在万万不能

Hearing that made me feel sick. If we ate like this every day then who would be working, robots? Maybe. But we mustn't start eating right now; the 58th generation of robots was still to be invented.

"Old Gao."

"Yes."

"Why are you so quiet? Did you never discover Zhu's talents?"

"Oh yes, I knew about them a long time ago."

"Then why didn't you ask him to help you improve your restaurant?"

"I...did, I asked him to give talks."

"That was only temporary. He didn't have a proper title."

Everyone suddenly fell silent. All eyes turned to me. I was on the alert. Some kind of deal had been planned for this dinner, it seemed.

"What kind of title?" I asked.

"Well, he's a sort of expert."

"What's he expert at?" I waited for an answer. A scientist, writer, actor? He was none of those.

"Eating ...." They couldn't go on; that was hardly complimentary.

"Someone who knows...." That was no good. Who didn't know how to eat?

Bao raised his chopsticks. "Foreigners have a term called 'Gourmet'."

"Excellent."

天天吃，那第五十八代的机器人还没有研制出来哩！

“老高。”

“噉。”

“你为什么不说话呀，像朱老这样的人材你以前一点儿也不知道吗？”

“知道，我很早便知道。”

“那你为什么不请他去指导指导，把你们的饭店搞搞好。”

“请……请过，我们请他讲过课。”

“那是临时的，没有个正式的名义。”

人们突然静下来，目光都集中在我的身上。我凝神了。在今天的这顿美餐里，似乎要谈什么交易?!

“名义……这名义就很难说了。”

“也是一种专家嘛！”

“叫什么专家好呢？”我等待着人们的回答。科学家、文学家、表演艺术家，你哪一家都靠不上去！

“吃的……”说不下去了，“吃的专家”是骂人的。

“会……”会吃专家也不通，谁不会吃？

包坤年把筷子一举：“外国人有个名字，叫‘美食家’！”

“好！”

“对！”

“美食家，美食家！”

“来来，为我们的美食家干一杯！”

"That's absolutely right."

"A gourmet, a gourmet," they all exclaimed.

"Let's all drink to our gourmet."

Zhu was extremely satisfied, and couldn't resist unbuttoning his old suit and walking round the table to toast me, giving my delicate glass such a powerful clink it almost broke it. This was the high point of his eating life. No one had ever paid him any attention of this lifetime of diligent eating; all he'd had was opposition. His real value was something recognized only by foreigners.

I hated myself for my ignorance, which had enabled Bao to defeat me. All I knew about was introducing fast food and hadn't been on guard for the introduction of gourmets.

People were enthusiastically starting on the tenth course when Kong entered to solicit comments. We thanked her and asked her to have a drink.

"Mrs Zhu, thank you for your superb cooking; thank your daughter too for bringing the food," I said. I wasn't that well disposed towards Kong, but I still had to admit that she was an excellent chef. Actually, she ought to be the president or vice-president of their culinary society. That's the way things were: those who worked weren't up to those who bragged. Those who cooked weren't up to those who ate.

Kong was delighted. "Why, thank you for your compliments, manager." She raised her glass and made a circular gesture to indicate all the guests. "I must offer my apologies to all of you. I'm not satisfied with the cooking I've done. I

朱自治踌躇满志了，忍不住把那旧西装敞开，举杯离座，绕台一周，特别用力地和我碰了碰杯，差点儿把那薄薄的玻璃杯都碰碎。是呀，他那吃的生涯如今才达到了顶点；辛辛苦苦地吃了一世，竟然无人重视，尚且有人反对。真正的价值还是外国人发现的！

我只恨自己的孤陋寡闻，一下子就败在包坤年的手里。我只知道引进“快餐”，却没有留心那“美食家”也是可以引进的。好吃鬼，馋痨坯等等都已经过时了，美食家！多好听的名词，它和我们的快餐一样，也可以大做一笔生意。如果成立世界美食家协会的话，朱自治可当副主席；主席可能是法国人，副主席肯定是中国的！

人们在欢乐声中拨动了第十只炒菜，这时候孔碧霞走了进来，询问大家对炒菜的意见。人们纷纷道谢，邀请孔碧霞同饮一杯。我站起身来为孔碧霞斟满酒，举起杯：

“谢谢朱师母，你的菜确实精美，谢谢你，也谢孩子，她为我们奔走了半天。”我对孔碧霞也没有多少好感，但是我得承认，她的确是做菜的能手，二级厨师的手艺，应该由她来当烹饪学学会的主席或者是副主席。世界上的事情会做的往往不如会吹的，会烧的也不如会吃的！

孔碧霞很高兴：“哪里，能得到经理的称赞很不容易。”她举起杯来划了个大圈子：“怠慢

had to use tinned bamboo shoots since I couldn't get any fresh ones."

"You're being too modest."

"Let's drink to Madame Gourmet."

After everybody had drained their wine, Bao removed the glasses. But this was far from the end of the banquet; he was only changing them.

Zhu produced a set of Yixing pottery wine cups in the shape of peaches with twig and leaf handles. A jar of mild yellow rice wine was brought in. It seemed that the vintage of wine rose with the guests' spirits as the feast advanced. I stole a glance at the two bottles of *wuliangye* in the cabinet. They would probably be opened just before the soup. I wondered who was paying for the meal. Was it Zhu, or somebody's public relations fund?

Kong withdrew to raise the curtain on the second half of the banquet. Hot dishes and desserts came in a stream until a "three-in-one" brought the meal to its climax.

This "three-in-one" was a pigeon, a chicken and a duck stuffed one inside the other and looked like a huge duck sprawling on an oval plate. This was surrounded by quail eggs.

Everyone exclaimed in admiration.

"Old Gao."

"Yes?"

"Now, isn't this the height of perfection?"

"Yes."

大家了，几只炒菜连我也不满意，现在没有冬笋，只好用罐头。”

“啊，没说的。”

“来来，为美食家的夫人干一杯!”

一杯干了以后，包坤年开始收酒杯了，别以为宴会已经结束，早着呢，现在是转场，更换道具的。

朱自冶又拿出一套宜兴的紫砂杯，杯形如桃，把手如枝叶，颇有民族风味。酒也换了，小坛装的绍兴加饭、陈年花雕。下半场的情绪可能更加高涨，所以那酒的度数也得略有升高。黄酒性情温和，也不会叫人口麻舌辣。我向那酒橱乜了一眼，看见还有两瓶五粮液放在那里，可能是在喝汤之前用的。我暗自思忖，这桌饭不知是谁出钱，是朱自冶的银行存款呢，还是人家的宣传费?

孔碧霞告辞以后，下半场的大幕拉开，热菜、大菜、点心滚滚而来：松鼠桂鱼，蜜汁火腿，“天下第一菜”，翡翠包子，水晶烧卖……一只“三套鸭”把剧情推到了顶点!

所谓三套鸭便是把一只鸽子塞在鸡肚里，再把鸡塞到鸭肚里，烧好之后看上去是一只整鸭，一只硕大的整鸭趴在船盆里。船盆的四周放着一圈鹌鹑蛋，好像那蛋就是鸽子生出来的。

人们叹为观止了：

“老高。”

"Doesn't this alone make Zhu a qualified adviser for your restaurant with say, a monthly allowance of something in the region of one hundred?"

I realized that this was the crucial topic of the day. I quickly found an excuse.

"That's very flattering, but my restaurant is much too small to warrant the help of someone so distinguished."

"It's not the size that counts, it's how the manager feels."

Luckily, three-in-one came to my aid at this point. When it was divided up, people were too busy to talk.

I stole a glance at my watch; three hours had passed since the dinner started. There was still my favourite *wuliangye* and a delicious soup to bring it to an end and then there would be fruit. But I dared not stay to the very end; people would chat over their tea and try and put a rope around my neck.

"I'm very sorry, but I have to leave for another appointment. Please allow me to express my thanks to Mr Zu and to everyone...." I stood up as I spoke, retreating all the time. After I'd gone five steps I hurried across the stone bridge. When I looked back I saw stunned expressions on the face of everyone in the room.

I had fled in a totally ungracious and impolite manner. Kong would be very hurt if I didn't say goodbye to her.

Kong and her daughter were still busy cooking. When she heard I was leaving. she was disappointed. "Oh, perhaps you don't like my cooking."

"嘬。"

"你看看,这算不算登峰造极?"

"算。"

"就凭这一手,让朱老到你们的店里去当个技术指导还不行,每月给个百二八十的。"

我明白了,这恐怕是今天的中心议题,连忙采取推挡术:"不敢当,我们的庙小,容不下大菩萨。"

"你们的庙也不小呀,就看庙主的眼力……"

幸亏那只三套鸭帮了忙,当它被拆开以后人们便顾不上说话了,因为嘴巴的两种功能是不便于同时使用的。

我看了看表,这顿饭已经吃了将近三个钟头,后面还要喝五粮液(我很想喝),还会有一只精彩的大汤作总结,还会有生梨或者是菠萝蜜。可我不敢终席了,因为终席之后便是茶话,那圈套便会绕到我的脖子上面。

"实在对不起,我下面还有一个约会,不能奉陪到底。谢谢朱先生,谢谢诸位,谢谢……"我不停地说谢谢,不停地向后退,退了五步便转身,径奔石板桥而去。过得桥来回头看,见那长窗里的人都呆在那里。

我觉得今天的举止很不礼貌,也不光彩,好像是逃出来的。如果不向女主人打个招呼,那孔碧霞会伤心,她是很要场面的。

孔碧霞和她的女儿还在忙着,听说我要走,有点儿扫兴:"啊呀,大概是我做的菜不好吧,

"Your cooking is excellent. One of these days I'm going to ask you to talk about it at my restaurant."

She laughed. "It's nothing special, you could do just as well. The only problem is that you don't have as much time to do things meticulously. It takes almost two weeks to prepare things really well. Why don't you stay a while longer? I'm just making the soup...."

I suddenly remembered something, "Mrs Zhu, why aren't you having a pumpkin bowl for dessert? When your husband came with me to collect those pumpkins he claimed he would invent a pumpkin bowl with a pastoral atmosphere."

"Don't listen to him," she laughed. "All he does is brag."

Chocolates

To the west of No. 54 was A'er's home, where another dinner was waiting for me.

I was already full. The "three-in-one" sat heavily on my stomach and their proposal weighed on my mind. I just wanted to drink a little 128 proof with A'er and his father to warm me up so I could heave a long sigh over the joy, sorrow and hardship of life.

Autumn in the golden season in every city and Suzhou is no exception. This year the temperature was mild, the sky blue and the humidity low. The fragrance of osmanthus drifted out from people's courtyards. The sky above the little lanes was seldom so blue, rarely had so many clusters of

不合你的口味!”

“哪里,你的菜做得确实不错,什么时候请你到我们的店里去讲讲,交流交流。”

孔碧霞笑了:“有什么好交流的,这些菜你们都会做,问题是你们没有这么多的时间,细模细样地做,还得准备个十几天……哎,你不能再坐会儿吗,还有一只大汤咧。”

“知道……”我突然想起件事情来了:“朱师母,今天的甜菜里面怎么没有南瓜盅?困难年朱先生和我一起去拉南瓜的时候,说是要创造出一只南瓜盅,有田园风味!”

孔碧霞咯咯地笑了:“你听他瞎吹,他这人是宜兴的夜壶,独出一张嘴!”

十二　巧克力

出了五十四号向西走,到阿二家去。天啊,那里还有一桌酒席等着我哩!我什么也不想吃了,三套鸭不好消化,那一番谈话也值得回味。可我想和阿二、和他的爸爸干几杯,当然是白酒,六十四度,喝下一口之后像一条热线似的直通到肚里,哈地一声长叹,人间无数的欢乐与辛酸都包含在内。

秋天对每个城市来说,都是金色的。苏州也不例外,天高气爽,不冷不热,庭院中不时地送出桂花的香气。小巷子的上空难得有这么湛

white clouds. It was Sunday and the lane was quiet. People were doing their housework, the most important part of which was cooking. Steam floated out of windows which opened on to the street and the sizzling sound of things frying could be heard.

On the way to A'er's I had to go by my old home. It hadn't changed a bit. The black lacquer door, the white walls, the five rooms set back from the street with Zhu's old house behind them. For just a moment, I seemed to see A'er waiting with his rickshaw at the gate and Zhu coming out in a long gown to sit on the seat, step on the bell and head off to Zhu Hongxing's for noodles. For forty years he had been the incarnation of food, had haunted me like a ghost, had unintentionally decided my career. I hated and opposed him. wanted to keep away form him. Yet instead of getting rid of him, I had been asked to give him a monthly allowance to be my adviser. I would happily give more money to Yang if he could come. But what was Zhu, this man who could only teach people how to squander and waste; what bearing could he have on our work? Just try and squeeze your way in, Mr Gourmet! As long as I'm here you're just daydreaming.

I felt better as soon as I got to A'er's. It was a happy world, with no social rituals, no hypocrisy, no extravagance. The courtyard was full of people cracking melon seeds and eating wedding sweets. My family was already there. My one-year-old grandson was a happy chubby baby who could smile, grimace and wave his plump little hands. Now

蓝，难得有白云成堆。星期天来往的人也不多，绝大部分的人都在忙家务，家务之中吃为先，临巷的窗子里冒出水蒸气，还听到菜下油锅时滋啦一声炸溜。

从五十四号到阿二家，必须经过我原来住过的地方，这地方的样子一点儿也没有变。石库门，白粉墙，一排五间平房向里缩进一段，朱自冶住过的小洋楼就在里面。我仿佛看见阿二的黄包车就停在门前，朱自冶穿着长袍从门里出来，高踞在黄包车上，脚下铃铛一响，赶到朱鸿兴去吃头汤面。四十年来他是一个吃的化身，像妖魔似的缠着我，决定了我一生的道路，还在无意之中决定了我的职业。我厌恶他，反对他，想离他远点。可是反也反不掉，挥也挥不走，到头来还要当我的指导，每月给个百二八十的。百二八十是多少？加起来除以二，正好是一百元人民币！如果杨中宝能来当指导，我情愿在一百之外再加二十，奖金还不计算在内。可这朱自冶算什么，食客提一级最多是个清客而已，他可以指导人们去消遣，去奢靡，却和我们的工作没有多大的关系。美食家，让你去钻门子吧，只要我还站在庙门口，你就休想进得去！

一直走到阿二家，我心中的怨气才稍稍平息。这里是个欢乐的世界，没有应酬，没有虚伪，也谈不上奢靡。天井里坐满了人，在那里嗑瓜子，吃喜糖。我的一家都来了，包括我那个刚满周岁的小外孙在内。这孩子长得又白

that each couple could only have one child, each baby had six grownups to look after and admire him. He was the centre of attention. All the guests gave him sweets, talked baby talk to him and passed him round.

Somebody gave him a fruit drop which he pushed out with his tongue.

"Doesn't he like sweets?"

"He does, but he likes good ones."

"Then let's give him a chocolate."

And sure enough the little boy stuffed half the chocolate into his mouth and sucked greedily.

Everyone laughed. "What a clever baby! He likes chocolate."

My head was spinning. When he grew up he would be another gourmet. I had spent my whole life unsuccessfully trying to change Zhu; surely I could change this little creature. I grabbed the chocolate and forced a fruit drop into his mouth.

He started to wail.

Everybody present was stunned, thinking to themselves that this old boy had gone off his rocker.

August-September 1982

Translated by Yu Fanqin

又胖，会吃会笑，还会做眯眼，捏捏小拳头和人表示再会。现在都是独生子女，一个娃娃可以有六个大人在他的身上花费物力和精力。满天井的人都以娃娃为中心，给他吃，逗他笑，从这个人的手里传到那个人的手里。

有人把硬糖塞到我那小外孙的嘴里，他立刻吐了出来。

“怎么，他不吃糖吗？”

“他呀，要吃好的！”

“试试，给他巧克力。”

有人拿了一条巧克力来，剥去半段金纸，塞到孩子的手里。果然，这孩子拿了就往嘴里送，吃得口兹口兹咂咂地流口水。

人们哄笑起来了：“啊呀，这孩子真聪明，懂得吃好的！”

我的头脑突然发炸，得了吗，长大了又是一个美食家！我一生一世管不了个朱自冶，还管不了你这个小东西！伸手抢过巧克力，把一粒硬糖硬塞在小嘴里。

孩子哇地一声哭起来了……

满座愕然，以为我这个老家伙的神经出了问题。

1982年8—9月

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